FROM MAINE

EDWARD W. BOK

Colorado College Library

B C941b

Library No. 75167

From C.L.B.C.

Received July 1925

OK CLUB

BOOK CLUB."

upply of new books
y by presenting it
its members for a

pointed as follows,
er to be appointed
his committee shall
de on the books to
hich purpose three
have a vote at all
port at the annual

committee, or on

5.—The subscription of **FIVE DOLLARS SHALL BE PAYABLE IN ADVANCE** and shall include the right to use the books of the Coburn Library, subject to the rules of that institution. No books shall be issued to members who are in arrears for subscription.

6.—**BOOKS SHALL NEVER BE HANDED FROM ONE MEMBER TO ANOTHER, BUT MUST BE RETURNED TO THE LIBRARIAN, NEITHER SHALL THEY UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES BE LENT TO NON-SUBSCRIBERS.**

7.—Books shall be obtainable by members in order of application. Names may be entered in a register kept for that purpose, but no member can take out more than two Club books at a time, and of these two only one can be a work of fiction.

8.—Two weeks shall be allowed for the perusal of a book.

9.—If any member shall retain a book longer than the time allowed he shall, on being advised by postal card, return the book the next day without fail.

10.—Members may enter the names of such books as they desire in the suggestion book kept for that purpose, and the member suggesting a new work shall have the privilege of reading it first, by asking to have it reserved for him. The committee shall, by majority vote, decide on each of the suggestions in rotation. No technical books shall be suggested, as they would evidently be of little value except to a very limited number of the members.

11.—Members shall be advised by printed circulars or otherwise, about the first of each month of the new books received during the past thirty days.

12.—Members may give notice of their resignation to the Secretary in writing.

PLEASE DO NOT MARK THIS BOOK

5167
April 1923

A MAN FROM MAINE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_S0-ATV-233

A MAN FROM MAINE

BY

EDWARD W. BOK

AUTHOR OF "THE AMERICANIZATION OF EDWARD BOK"
"TWO PERSONS"

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1923

COPYRIGHT, 1923, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

COPYRIGHT, 1923, BY THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY COMPANY

Printed in the United States of America

Published April, 1923

070.509
C941Zb

TO

LOUISA KNAPP CURTIS

IN AFFECTIONATE MEMORY.

UNTIL HER PASSING AWAY IT MAY TRULY BE SAID:
ALL OF THIS SHE SAW, AND A PART
OF IT SHE WAS

75167

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK	xi
	MR. CURTIS'S ESTIMATE OF HIS OWN LIFE .	2
CHAPTER		
I.	STARTING LIFE WITH THREE CENTS	3
II.	HIS FIRST PAPER AND HIS FIRST PRESS	11
III.	HIS FIRST YACHT	20
IV.	A BOY'S HOME AND BUSINESS IN RUINS	23
V.	HIS LOVE OF MUSIC	28
VI.	HIS LAST DAYS IN PORTLAND . .	40
VII.	HIS FIRST DAYS IN BOSTON . . .	46
VIII.	IS THERE DISHONESTY IN BUSINESS?	58
IX.	THE MAN WHO HELPED	64
X.	THE OTHER HALF	71
XI.	THE CHANCES YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY	77
XII.	PHILADELPHIA BEGINNINGS . . .	85
XIII.	"YE MUST BE BORN ANEW" . .	97
XIV.	THE RISE OF "THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL"	106
XV.	CLEANING HOUSE IN ADVERTISEMENTS	127
XVI.	THE METHODS BY WHICH HE WORKS	135

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVII.	The Story of "A Singed Cat"	149
XVIII.	His Attitude Toward His Editors	164
XIX.	The Single-Track Mind	176
XX.	Acquires "The Country Gentleman"	186
XXI.	A Business Pulled Out of the Air	192
XXII.	The Purchase of "The Public Ledger"	197
XXIII.	The Man in a Personal Chat	213
XXIV.	The Seed of Success	224
XXV.	The Magnitude of What He Has Built Up	233
XXVI.	The Man Behind	238
XXVII.	The Business Man After He Achieves	248
XXVIII.	"With All Thy Getting"	259
XXIX.	"The Youngest Man in the Whole Outfit"	272

Biographical Data: Cyrus Hermann Kotzschmar Curtis . . 277

A Personal Acknowledgment . 279

ILLUSTRATIONS

Cyrus H. K. Curtis . . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

Mr. Curtis's birthplace 4

Mr. Curtis at six years of age 8

Mr. Curtis's first journalistic enterprise when he was fifteen years of age 16

Mr. Curtis's mother and father 24

Mr. Curtis at his first home organ with one of his grandsons 32

The great organ in the Portland, Maine, City Hall 34

Mrs. Curtis (Louisa Knapp) 74

Mr. Curtis's home at Wyncote, Pennsylvania . . 100

Mr. Curtis's daughter and only child, Mrs. Edward Bok 104

Mrs. Curtis (Kate Stamwood Pillsbury) 154

The old Public Ledger building 202

The new Public Ledger building 210

Mr. Curtis's steam yacht *Lyndonia* 214

The Curtis Publishing Company's warehouse . . 234

The Curtis Publishing Company's building . . . 244

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

The average young man enters business with the notion fairly pounded into his head that it is a "daily grind." He sees this phrase in the newspaper, he finds it in the book which he reads, and, if he attends preparatory school, college, or university, he is told so when he graduates in addresses by more or less professional commencement speakers of academic knowledge or preachers of cloistered minds. The result is that thousands of young men begin their careers with the conviction that business is dry, hard, uninteresting, and consists of little else than monotonous routine. And unless the young man looks around for himself and uses his own powers of observation and proves the assertion to be the falsity that it is, he falls under the spell of the misguidance given him and succumbs to a life of drudgery. He was told it was so, and he finds it so. It was predestined.

It is a curious fact that while most of us believe in the saying that "truth is stranger than fiction," and have it proved to us constantly in our own or other lives, when we want to live in

the world of romance we turn to fiction, whereas, in actuality, the greatest and truest romances are being lived around us in the world of business. For instead of business being a daily grind or a deadly routine, it is really a romance of the most thrilling order; an adventure filled with the most fascinating incidents.

Take this life of Mr. Curtis, and just consider two or three high points. Here is a little boy selling the newspapers made by other men, and within a brief span of time you see tens of thousands of boys selling the publications made by Mr. Curtis. In other words, you see an amazing metamorphosis of the buyer of a few papers becoming the seller of millions. Is this prosaic? Is this a dry fact?

Compare the picture of a boy without twenty-five cents to go and see a monitor lying in Portland Harbor and, with a dog, climbing on a log and paddling his way out to the ship until the crew lift him aboard, with the picture of the same boy, some years later, sailing into the same harbor on his own yacht: one of the largest pleasure-vessels in the United States. What is this if it is not romance?

Fancy a boy accidentally finding on a hotel reading-room table the picture of a new building in Philadelphia, the first building exclusively de-

voted to a newspaper in the United States; looking at the picture with eyes of wonder; going to the Quaker city so as to see the building for his own confirmation, and some years later owning that same building and the newspaper which it housed. What is this if it is not adventure of the most adventuresome order?

And that is business of whatever sort; the most marvellously fascinating game ever devised and played by men: a game so varied in its nature as to call forth all the attributes of mankind; all the knowledge a man can acquire; all the vitality he can summon; every quality of which he is capable. Take alone the quality of personal courage required in business and you have before you the greatest human drama ever staged by the hands of man. The three really great things in the world are a mountain, the ocean, and an earnest man at his work. The potentialities of each is beyond human calculation.

I would ask every young man who reads this book to note well the corroboration of the truth of the statement that "the proper study of mankind is man": in other words, that the proper study of mankind is not his achievement so much as himself. For it is a truth which knows no exception that behind every great accomplish-

ment is a man greater than the achievement. A successful life means, first of all, a strong man behind it. The fascination in biography or autobiography lies not as much in the actual accomplishment as in how the achievement was worked out: that is, in the man and the processes of his mind. That is what makes the story of a man's life so valuable: it is a book of experience. In this life, a young man will find behind one of the greatest successes of its kind ever made, one of the simplest of men. That is always true: the more signal the success the simpler the man. A man must be simple of life, and remain simple, to be a success. So often is it said of some successful man, "He is so simple." Naturally! If he were not so, success would not be his. A book such as this makes, therefore, for being a master text-book for young men.

So, the story here told seeks not merely to trace a business life, but to emphasize the great truth, particularly to young men, that business is a great adventure: a well of romance so rich in its thrilling moments that no man has ever sounded its depths. Enough remains for thousands of young men who approach it with eager zest, enthusiastic effort, and alert minds. To such it will prove what it is: an arena and a university with its limits only fixed by themselves:

a game so full of romance and adventure as to surpass the imagination of the greatest fictionist. But a young man must hold on to one essential fact: that the current coin in business, and the only coin that is consistently current, is character. And to a clear realization of that fact he must add the strongest belief that character is of inner self, and that the inner self is Divine in creation and Divine in guidance.

A MAN FROM MAINE

MR. CURTIS'S ESTIMATE OF HIS OWN LIFE

"Writing a book about me?" Mr. Curtis asked one day. "What kind of a book?"

"A book about your life," I answered.

"My life? How can you do that? I was born, and I'm not dead, yet," he answered. "There's nothing more to it."

It is the "nothing more to it" that I have tried to set down here, and I leave the decision to the reader as to the correctness of Mr. Curtis's estimate of his own life.

A MAN FROM MAINE

CHAPTER I

STARTING LIFE WITH THREE CENTS

IT was a thrilling time in the '60's for an American boy. The country was at war; life was punctuated with the news of battles; newspapers were filled with the decisions of Lincoln, the whereabouts of Lee, and the doings of Grant. Soldiers were being drilled in the armories and marched to the railroad-stations to go to the front. Groups of men stood on the street corners talking over the latest war news. Women were sewing for the soldiers. War meetings were being held and were crowded to the doors. Sea raiders were busy.

It was very important for the people of a harbor city like Portland, Maine, whether its mercantile shipping could venture out with a reasonable degree of safety. And when a sea raider became active on its coast, and exchanged his craft for a better one directly at the mouth of Portland Harbor, is it any wonder that the minds of Portland boys were set on fire with the doings of the "rebel pirates"? It

was thrilling enough to read about pirates, but to have them at one's own door, so to speak,—what could be more thrilling to an alert-minded boy? Fancy then the completeness of the picture when a pirate, who had done a thriving business along the New England coast, exchanged his vessel for a better one almost at the very docks of Portland, was actually intercepted trying to steal out of the harbor with no wind, and, rather than risk capture, blew up the ship! And then the piratical crew, actually picked out of the water, was brought to shore, and marched in a solid phalanx through the streets to the city jail. Could anything be more actually satisfying to a boy than to run along beside the band of pirates,—securely shackled, of course,—shaking his fists at them and shouting, "Pirates!" "Rebels!"

It was in this thrilling atmosphere, full of romantic adventure, that an eager-faced, alert-minded boy of twelve played and scampered through the streets of the chief port city of Maine. He was all over its streets: his little legs carried him into every nook and corner, and in summer when of the city itself there was not enough to satisfy him he lived on its water-front and principally in the water. He swam like the dog that was always with him; he pad-

MR. CURTIS'S BIRTHPLACE

Corner of Brown and Cumberland Streets, Portland, Maine

dled on logs when no rowboat was available; he splashed the water over more timid boys. He could swim every stroke that a boy could know; he could float on his back; he could dive; he could tread water like the dog at his side; he knew and loved the water, and the water was kindly to him in that it never gave him a "cramp" or tainted his affection for it with an accident. And so the water and he began a friendship which was to grow with the years and last through a lifetime: such a wonderful friendship for a boy to have and a life-saver for the man in after years!

Naturally, the Fourths of July were very busy days in those war times, and to be busy in a boy's way on the Fourth means that he must have pennies, which in turn can buy the explosives that Americans still feel, in certain parts of our country, belong to a fitting celebration of American independence.

Now, the Fourth of July is a very long day in a boy's calendar, for it begins early and ends as late as he can make it last. And it follows logically that a few pennies are not likely to last any too long over such a day. It was in this predicament that this twelve-year-old Portland boy found himself on the Fourth of 1862 when at five o'clock he banged into his mother's

home, his mind full of evening plans, and asked for "a little change." He had evidently forgotten that his mother had already given him some "change" in the morning, but mothers are very likely not to have the same lapses of memory on such a point, and she reminded her son of the fact.

"If you want money to spend," she suggested, "why not go and earn it?"

The boy's topaz eyes looked fixedly at his mother's face reflected to him as she brushed her hair before the mirror. "Earn money!" That was a new idea, sure enough!

And then and there, at the age of twelve, the first dawning consciousness of the business career of Cyrus Hermann Kotzschmar Curtis broke upon him. The mother went on brushing her hair, and the boy went on thinking. Finally, he reached expression: "If I earn some money, can I keep it all for myself and spend it on what I want?" he asked.

"You may," replied the mother.

The boy sauntered out, his little mind full of thoughts, and on his way to the front door he jingled in his pocket the three cents remaining of his morning's allowance.

As he reached the street, he met a boy friend who looked glum.

"What's up?" asked Cyrus.

"Stuck," replied the boy, as he looked at the three copies of *The Courier* under his arm.

Whereupon the idea of the first newspaper purchase came to the future publisher.

"Give you three cents for 'em," he offered.

The papers were handed over, the bargain was complete, and young Curtis went out to "cash in." But it took him four hours to sell his three papers. Nine o'clock at night is somewhat late to begin celebrating the Fourth; his boy friends had all gone home, and so Cyrus went to his home with his nine cents capital in his pocket.

Next day he spent these nine cents for that evening's *Courier*, sold his stock, and on the second day found his capital increased to eighteen cents. But he did not find it easy going. The other newsboys on the streets had their fixed routes, or individual "blocks," and when the new recruit started to sell he found himself hooted and chased at every turn; in fact he was sometimes beaten up. And being undersized, the little boy was no match for the other boys, and he found it necessary, at every point, to give way. The new merchant could find no place on the streets to sell his wares. He had trouble even to buy them. When he went to

The Courier's newsboys' room where they bought their papers every afternoon, the boys treated the new invader into their territory very rough.

He endured this for a few days, and then one afternoon as he was playing at the water-front looking across to Fort Preble, an idea occurred to him. He went to see the manager of the newspaper, and laid his plan before him. The soldiers at Fort Preble were naturally keen to get the latest war news: no newspaper service went out to the Fort: he would go if the manager would let him have all the newspapers he could carry to the Fort, and would give him credit until he could go out and sell them. He explained that it would be a new market for *The Courier*, would extend its circulation by just so many copies. The manager hesitated for a moment, and then agreed to trust the boy for one day's papers.

"That's all I want," was the reply.

The newsboys, in those days, would go into a room and assemble before a large wire screen, and as their names were called they would receive their papers. The boy who gave the largest order was called first. Little Cyrus explained to the manager that if he took the usual course, on account of his size and the opposition of the boys to him as a newcomer, they would

MR. CURTIS AT SIX YEARS OF AGE

"I detested those curls and sat for this photograph upon condition that the curls would come off next day—they did"

beat him up and take his papers away from him. He asked permission to receive his papers behind the screen, so that he could run out the back way. Owing to his large order, his name was called first, and as he was given his papers behind the screen, a howl of protest went up from the boys, and a crowd rushed out to catch him as he came out of the door and to appropriate his papers. But going out the back way and racing toward the water-front, instead of to the heart of the city, were unexpected moves. Cyrus got away, and running as fast as his little legs would carry him, and the huge bundle of papers would let him, he made for the sailboat ferry, and went over to Fort Preble with his stock in trade. Of course, the soldiers eagerly bought the papers. Not only that, but they gladly and voluntarily paid five cents instead of three cents per copy, for the special service rendered, and within a few moments the little newsboy's stock was completely sold out. He went home happy. His first step in initiative had succeeded. He naturally could not know at that age that he had revealed in this act the principle underlying the success of his entire future career. What the newsboy at twelve had done, the perfectly simple and obvious thing though no other boy had thought

of it, the future publisher was to do in all his subsequent undertakings.

To-day, there are, conservatively speaking, forty to fifty thousand newsboys like the little boy who scampered over to Fort Preble to sell newspapers, on the streets of the United States and all over the world, selling the publications which he is making for them.

And yet there are folks who say there is no romance in business.

CHAPTER II

HIS FIRST PAPER AND HIS FIRST PRESS

IT was not long, of course, before the Fort Preble exploit of the young street merchant became known, and one of the persons to hear of it was the business manager of the *Portland Press.* Such a boy, he argued, was too good to remain on a rival paper, and so he offered little Cyrus two dollars a week if he would serve two established routes, with the privilege of selling as many papers on his own hook as he chose. The boy liked the idea of a steady income, and he accepted the offer. But *The Press* was a morning paper, and this meant that the boy would have to get up each morning, summer and winter, at a quarter before four o'clock, serve his routes, sell his own papers, get back to his breakfast at seven o'clock, and go to school at nine.

"That's why I never grew," he now says; "I never had enough sleep, and I was always on my feet. Fancy getting home from a party at eleven or twelve o'clock, and then getting up at a quarter to four! And it was cold in Portland in winter!"

But the boy did it, and did it for four summers and four longer winters!

After he had been for a while with *The Press*, the business manager of the other paper, the *Portland Argus*, sought him, and Cyrus once more changed employers. "Because he offered me more," was his reason. He was selling *The Argus* when he ran into the office on that fateful day in American history and a boy yelled out to him: "Your President has been shot!" The little boy had been known among his boy friends as an ardent little Republican, but in spite of his grief at the thought of Lincoln's assassination, he realized that there would be an extra demand for newspapers on that day. And, in fact, an extra stock sold off almost as quickly as he could hand out the papers.

Selling the papers made by another was, of course, a very necessary and convenient stepping-stone to the newsboy, and for a time he argued that he could do nothing else. He never looked at the papers under his arm, however, but the thought would come to him of the exhilaration of actually owning the paper that one sold. This idea was always with him, and one day he confided his daring plan of starting a paper of his own to his chum, Walter Goold. Walter, somehow, fitted into the idea in Cyrus's

head because, even in those days, he reasoned that there must be two persons to get out a paper of any sort: one to make it and the other to sell it. So it came out that the two boys agreed to go into partnership. They were to start a boy's paper to be called *Young America.* It was to be a weekly, and was to sell for two cents a copy. A printer was found who made a contract to print as many as four hundred copies for five dollars. And so it came to pass that on April 5, 1865, the first issue of little Cyrus's first paper broke upon a public. Unfortunately, however, it was not an expectant public. And as the public didn't expect it, it had not been looking for it, and when it looked at the first issue it did not seem anxious to buy it. This, naturally, was somewhat of a surprise to the boys. In fact, it was more than a surprise to Walter, who, seeing that their first issue did not sell, began to wonder where the five dollars were to come from to pay for the printer. His partner did not spend so much time in wondering about the first issue as he did in planning for the second issue. But wonder with Walter grew into worry, and as the boy was going to school and had his lessons to learn, his intense worry about the huge debt which hung over his head, and that of his part-

ner, soon showed in his failure to know his lessons. This failure was soon noticed by his parents, who very promptly notified Cyrus that the partnership, so far as Walter was concerned, would have to be instantly dissolved. So, before he could get out his second number, Cyrus found himself "left cold" as sole proprietor of a paper, with five dollars of debt on his shoulders.

Cyrus did not like the idea of the five-dollar debt any more than did Walter,—and he liked even less the idea of this same five-dollar debt recurring weekly. But unlike Walter he did not run away from the problem. He decided to think it out and solve it. He had faith enough in his venture, but how to get the paper out without having to pay the printer that five-dollar bill every week certainly was a question. With true Yankee thrift, he had saved most of his profits from his newspaper selling, and he decided that with this capital the propitious moment had come to go into business for himself,—to set up his own printing plant. With the boy, as with the man, a plan, once decided upon, must be carried out at once. So he drew on his savings, paid the printer his five dollars, and the next morning took the first train for Boston "to inspect presses." He has often

taken press-inspection journeys since, but none that could equal this trip. It was a momentous occasion for the embryo publisher.

To a maker of hand-presses went Cyrus when he arrived in Boston, only to find that presses cost more than he had reckoned. Finally, he saw a small hand-press under the counter.

"What is that?" he asked.

"Oh, that's an old model we don't make or sell any more," was the answer.

"Let me see it," said the boy. And after looking it over, he asked: "How much?"

"Well, I'll let you have that for two dollars and a half," said the merchant.

"Here's the money," replied Cyrus, and he had bought his first press. He would be able only to print one page of his paper at a time, he figured out; but that in a way he reckoned would be an advantage in that he would not have to buy so much type. He could buy just enough to set up one page, print that, distribute the type, set the second page, print that, and so print the four pages of which his paper consisted. This type he also bought. This cost him about fifteen dollars. And so with type and press, he went home to begin business as a publisher on his own account. He had now some twenty dollars invested in his equipment,

and he realized that he would have to work hard to cover his capital and get some profit.

He did.

I cannot write of this little boy's venture with the purchase of his first press for two dollars and a half without turning the book of this same boy's life a few pages ahead and considering his last purchase of a press for his newspaper plant: a single press measuring one hundred and thirty-five feet long and costing over three hundred thousand dollars;—and the combined printing plants now owned by this boy total a value of over eight millions of dollars!

All the quality of adventure lies in such a beginning leading to such an achievement: there is so much of the amazing possibility of American opportunity in those two pictures, one so logically the result of the other! What American boy of ambition can read of such a result without having every energy aroused within him, for what is possible with one boy is possible with another, given the same spirit of initiative and determination?

One day a man asked Cyrus how much he charged for advertisements. The boy had not reached that problem in his business, but naturally he was not going to disclose this fact to a prospective advertiser! "Ten cents a square,"

Answers to Enigmas.

No. 1. Pioneer Boy. Answered by E. B. Duran, J. E. Mulvix, Chas. Averill, L. H. Bosworth, and J. O. Warren. No. 2 Switzerland. Answered by J. E. Mulvix, Chas. Averill and L. H. Bosworth.

—oo—

Enigmas.

No. 3.

I am composed of 15 letters.
My 2, 3, 7, is a fowl.
My 8, 12, 11, 4, is a color.
My 1, 5, 7, 8, 6, 3, is a noun.
My 14, 15, 7, is an article much needed.
My 13, is a pronoun.
My 2, 9, 10, is a meat.
My whole is what everybody should have.

By L. H. B.

No. 4.

I am composed of 14 letters.
My 2, 5, 6, is a liquid.
My 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, is a great River.
My 2, 14, 6, 7, 13, is an important article.
My 6, 8, 12, will trot.
My 1, 2, 11, 4, 13, 10, is a country in Asia.
My whole is a fierce animal.

E. B. D.

Conundrums.

Why is a man with a cork leg never to be forgotten by his friends? Because he has been remembered.

What is taken from you before you have it yourself? Your portrait.

What is the difference between a cat and a catalogue? One has claws at the end of its paws, and the other has pauses at the end of its clauses.

Why is a crow a brave bird? Because he never shows a white feather.

—oo—

THE YOUNG AMERICA,
will be published by
C. H. CURTIS & CO.,
131 Middle St, Portland, Maine,
every week, Wednesdays.

—oo—

TERMS,

Terms per quarter,	$0 25
" " month,	.10
Single copies,	.02

—oo—

We have received so many articles for publication that we are obliged to defer some of them until next week.

—oo—

New Book—History of Grease, or Oils Well that Ends Well, by Pete Roleum.

The Young America.

Vol. I. Wednesday, April 12, 1865. No. 2.

THE YOUNG AMERICA,
is published by
C. H. CURTIS & CO.,
No. 131 Middle St., Portland, Me.

—oo—

The Overpaid Check.

[Continued.]

"No errors corrected out of bank; this is the rule, and it's as good on one side as on another. The banks made the rule, and let them abide by it. Didn't this very teller make a mistake of fifty dollars last winter against a check paid to Anderson & Miller, and refuse to correct it? I know a good many instances of the same kind. Now I'll turn the table on him, and he'll understand how it feels."

"You're wrong; depend upon it, you're wrong," answered Watson. "The teller refused to correct the alleged mistakes, because he did not know them to be such. But you know that you have received five hundred dollars, not your due, and that the loss will fall upon the individual who committed the error."

"You need not talk to me, Watson; I know what I'm about. I just wanted five hundred dollars, and the money has come in the nick of time."

Wheeler was in earnest, as his conduct proved. He kept the money, notwithstanding several persons, who came to know of the fact, urged him to do what was right; but it proved of no benefit to him, for he lost it all, and three hundred dollars besides, in an adventure made in one of his employer's ships, before the year was out.

About this time, the firm in whose service he was, discovered that a system of speculation had been going on in their establishment, but were unable to trace the wrong to any particular clerk among the large number employed. Whole pieces of fine and costly goods disappeared mysteriously, and, on various occa-

MR. CURTIS'S FIRST JOURNALISTIC ENTERPRISE WHEN HE WAS 15 YEARS OF AGE

was his reply, showing what he meant by a square, about eight to ten lines.

"I'll take a column," replied the advertiser, and never has Cyrus Curtis received a column advertisement for any of his publications which seemed larger or longer or more profitable than that first column for *Young America.*

Gradually, the boy publisher sold his little paper to his friends or to anyone who would buy a copy, but even then he saw that his printing plant was not busy all the time. So he decided to add a job-printing business, and printed some cards announcing this important fact; and after that no friend of his own or of his family was missed in a solicitation to print their visiting card for ten cents a pack of a hundred cards.

This departure brought him a very important job of printing some dancing orders for a dancing-master, which order eventually grew so large as to involve a debt of six dollars to the young printer. Much to his surprise he could not collect it. He sent bill after bill, with no response. He spoke to his father about the heavy indebtedness of this customer with whom he knew he was acquainted. His father laughed, and ventured the information that the man was known all over Portland as a "dead-beat" who never paid his bills.

Nothing daunted, the boy was determined that he must wipe off this large indebtedness from his books, and he called at the house of the dancing-master.

"I would like to collect my printing bill for six dollars," the boy told the man when he came to the door. In answer the man kicked the boy down the steps, and slammed the door behind him.

The next day the young printer was again at the dancing-master's house, this time at five o'clock in the morning. Wild-eyed, the man came down half dressed, and seeing the boy before him roundly cursed him for his untimely visit. But something in the look in the boy's eyes told him that the following morning would probably find him there again, and with a mental picture of his early sleep disturbed on successive mornings, he pulled a roll of bills out of his pocket, gave the boy six dollars, and once more kicked him down the front steps.

"But I got my money," he told his father.

For three years, the young publisher-printer kept at his business, giving as much of his time to it as he could, for he retained his early-morning newspaper route and, except in summer-time, went to school every day. He finally worked up the circulation of his little paper to

four hundred copies a week, which, at two cents a copy, gave him a weekly income of eight dollars besides what he derived from his few advertisements, the profits from his job-printing work and his newspaper routes. In all, he so prospered that in 1866 he had the large sum of two hundred dollars invested in his little plant. A proud publisher!

But truly "pride goeth before destruction." The pride of the young printer was completely shattered when on the night of the Fourth of July in 1866, his precious plant was entirely wiped out by the great fire which swept Portland.

And, for a while, the publishing career of Cyrus H. K. Curtis was interrupted.

CHAPTER III

HIS FIRST YACHT

ONE day when little Cyrus went to the water-front for the playtime which he always allowed himself, his busy eyes nearly popped out of his head to see a United States monitor at anchor in the Bay. John Ericsson's great invention was then thrilling the country, and this was the first monitor the boy had ever seen. He raced to the dock to which he saw a boat-load of people from the monitor was coming, only to find that visitors to the monitor were not permitted except upon payment of twenty-five cents. And he had not twenty-five cents. The boat plying between the shore and the craft, was filled with young people who had the means to gratify their curiosity.

The boy walked along the shore eagerly looking at the monitor and wondering how he could get on board and see it. His inevitable companion, a neighbor's dog, "which was almost mine," he would say, "because he was always with me," followed at his heels.

Even in his youngest boyhood—he was twelve at this time—the resourcefulness of his

active little mind never failed him, and it came to his rescue at this moment. He *must* see the monitor; he *must* go on board: it was an opportunity that perhaps never again would present itself. And with the strong desire in the boy's soul, his mind gave him the idea and the solution.

He raced along the water-front to a near-by shipyard where a number of logs to be used for spars were "seasoning" in the water. Appropriating one of the longest and widest, a log some thirty feet long, and wide enough to stand upon, Cyrus helped himself also to a stick and, standing on the log, with his dog behind him, began to paddle toward the monitor. "Of course, I didn't know how I would get on the monitor," he acknowledged, "even if I got to it, but I would get closer to it anyhow than if I stayed on shore." With this thought, he paddled. All went well, until the dog, full of life and interest in the escapade and scampering up and down the log, attempted at one point to rush past the boy, and pushed so hard as to send the boy into the water, and to slip in after him. The boy was, of course, as perfectly at home in the water as on the shore and quickly clambered up on the log. "But I was so darned mad at the dog," was his comment, "that I let

him make attempt after attempt to get on the log. Then I took compassion on him and pulled him up."

The incident had happened near the monitor, and, all unconscious of the fact, the boy and his dog became the centre of attraction, while Ericsson's great invention took a secondary place in the scene. The captain of the monitor ordered a boat to the rescue, and the boy and the dog, both drenching wet, but perfectly happy, were taken aboard and to the monitor, exactly where the boy wanted to be. The dog followed his usual way of shaking himself dry, but the human has not the same simple method, and so the boy was taken down to the engine-room, where his clothes were dried, and then was treated to an inspection tour all over the monitor and sent back to shore with a boat-load of visitors!

Thus Cyrus H. K. Curtis paddled on the face of Portland Harbor on his first yacht, only to return not so many years later, as time goes, and enter the same harbor on his own private yacht, one of the largest and perhaps the finest equipped of all pleasure-boats in the United States!

But this time it was built for him in a shipyard and was not appropriated!

CHAPTER IV

A BOY'S HOME AND BUSINESS IN RUINS

JUST as the Fourth of July of 1862 played an important part in the life of young Cyrus in awakening him to his earning capacity, so the Fourth of July, four years later, was to bring him to another turning-point in his life. In the late afternoon of that day the fire-bells of Portland rang, and, with other boys, Cyrus ran to the fire. It was fully two miles away from his home, and when he got there it had gained great headway. He heard people say that the entire block, where the fire started, was doomed. The boy stayed as long as he could in order to get home for supper, and returned to find his mother packing up. He told her where the fire was—over two miles away,—and that there was no possibility of its reaching their home. The mother argued, with Yankee shrewdness, that foresight was always better than hindsight, and after a light supper she started to pack again. The father was away from home for the night, in a neighboring city, and so the boy was told by his mother that he would be her sole reliance in saving what they

could. He had a sister, five years younger, and what an eleven-year-old girl could do she did. The fire had been steadily devouring block after block, and the boy began to see that his mother was perhaps right in at least taking precautions. Every truck and moving vehicle in the neighborhood was already commissioned by the neighbors, and so the only means of moving their possessions which the family could command was the boy's little express-wagon. This he filled to the top with the articles most desirable of saving and, unaccustomed to such a load, the tiny wagon broke down. So the three could only carry to what they deemed a place of safety all that their arms could hold.

It is shameful, but a fact, that there are always persons ready to take advantage of the helpless in time of stress. It proved so with the Curtis family. The mother had put all the most valuable belongings of the family in a sideboard, hoping to find some means of moving this one piece of furniture. While she was exploring the neighborhood for such a means, she saw two men steal into the house and come out carrying away the sideboard, the contents of which they had overheard the mother describe. The source of initiative invariably present in the career of the son is here found in the mother.

SALOME ANN CURTIS

CYRUS LIBBEY CURTIS

MR. CURTIS'S PARENTS

She saw instantly that the most valuable of the family's possessions were in danger, but even amid all the nervous excitement of the moment, in the absence of anyone to counsel her, the mother quietly made up her mind to turn what looked like a misfortune to her advantage. The sideboard was an old-fashioned heavy one, and the men had difficulty in carrying it. The mother slowly walked behind them at a safe distance, and when they had carried it over two miles from her house to a point of assured safety, exactly where she had tried in vain to get some one to truck it, she accosted the men, claimed the property, and sent them running for their lives!

At midnight the fire had reached the Curtis home on Wilmot Street, had laid it in ashes, and within a few hours afterward had travelled another mile and a half, more than fulfilling the mother's instinct and reducing the best part of the city of Portland to ruins.

The mother with her son and daughter had found a temporary home beyond the fire zone, but there was no sleep for the active boy at such a time, and he remained up all night. In the early morning hours he ventured near his one-time home to see if anything was left of it, —only to find his father standing at the foot

of the street disconsolately gazing, with hands clasped, in the direction of the spot where a few hours before he had left his family and home. Desolation was all around him, and he had not the remotest idea whether his family were alive, or, if alive, where its members were. He had heard of the fire in the city where he had gone to spend the night, and had returned to Portland on an early morning train. There the boy found his stricken father.

With his home burned down, his printing plant wiped out, with no insurance, the young Curtis faced life in all its grim actuality. He was sixteen, and had just finished his first year in high school. He decided that he must now leave school, and devote all his time to the making of a livelihood. The days of his boyhood were over!

This was all the education that the boy Cyrus was to get, and on his acquired knowledge, be it what it was, he was destined to make his career. He was denied a college training, or escaped it: the view-point depends on the way one looks at the question of whether a college education is to be preferred, where obtainable, to an early plunge into the world of affairs.

It is a favorite indoor game in newspaper-offices to start, every once in a while, a dis-

cussion of whether a man wins or loses through a college education. Naturally no decision can be arrived at, since the question is so essentially an individual one. Hence it is so futile to try and predict what any successful man might have been had a college education been possible for him.

"It's a great pity," said a college man to me once, "that a man like Mr. Curtis failed of the advantage of collegiate training. With his mental grasp of things and his sensitiveness to the finer things of life, it is easily possible that he would have gone farther."

But would he?

We can pass on what *has* happened, not on what *might* have happened.

CHAPTER V

HIS LOVE OF MUSIC

CYRUS'S father, Cyrus Libby Curtis, for whom he was given his first name, was of an artistic temperament, with all the quiet gentility of nature which is its frequent characteristic. In business he was associated with a house-furnishing establishment, and the decorative orders which came to the firm were intrusted to him. His evenings, however, were spent in the pursuit of the hobby of his heart,—music. He played the trombone in the Portland Band, and conducted all the rehearsals of the organization. He had an instinctive love of music. His wife was also musical: she sang in the church choir, where the husband first met her. The little daughter of the family, too, was musical in her tastes, so that the boy was born in a musical atmosphere.

Two years before Cyrus was born, the father had made the acquaintance in Boston of a musician named Hermann Kotzschmar, whom he induced to come to Portland, securing for him a position to play in the orchestra of a local

theatre. The two men became fast friends, and thus Cyrus was given the name of his father's friend.

Kotzschmar revealed the fact that he had special powers on the organ, and soon he became organist of the First Parish Congregationalist-Unitarian Church, where he remained for forty-seven years. It was while he held this position that he wrote his famous "Te Deum," known to all organists.

As the boy grew he naturally looked with interest upon the man whose name he bore, and as he heard him play the organ during church service the music in his nature responded to the touch of the organist. As often as he could, he would watch Kotzschmar play the organ.

One day a boy friend offered to sell a small hand melodeon, and Cyrus became its proud possessor. After hearing Kotzschmar play on the organ, he would go home, get out his little melodeon and try to imitate him from memory. He could not read the music, neither he nor his parents had the means for study, so the thirteen-year-old boy just "picked out the notes" on the melodeon.

"You simply carried the tune?" I asked him once.

"That's all I could do: all I can do now. I cannot read a tune, so if I can't carry it, I can't get it," was the answer.

Slowly, but surely, music became a settled factor in his life. He looked forward to Sundays so that he could hear Kotzschmar, and the organ took an established place in his life. With it he naturally directed his attention to choir-singing, and his ear became quickly attuned to good singing. As he grew older, nothing offended his ear so quickly as the singing of an indifferent church choir.

For years he played away at his little melodeon, and when he could not borrow a tune from Kotzschmar he began to pick out tunes from the family hymn-book. Gradually he learned to read the notes of four-part hymns, and this is as far as his reading of music ever went, to the present day. When he had exhausted the simplest hymn-book tunes which he could compass, he began to improvise little tunes of his own, and this gift of self-improvisation is to-day almost his exclusive expression on the organ. His mother said that from the very beginning he would never make a mistake in his improvisations, or pause at any point. He would, in this respect, perhaps have satisfied even the old lady who heard Rachmaninoff

as a small child play on the piano at a large social function. The boy selected a composition which happened to contain several long and impressive rests. During one of these rests the old lady, with more sympathy than musical knowledge, was seen to lean forward, pat the young pianist on the shoulder, and say to him: "That is all right. Next time play us something you know, dear."

All through Mr. Curtis's life has this love of music, particularly sacred music, developed within him and proved his chief outlet. He has become articulate through his fingers; seated at the organ he expresses his nature as he rarely does in words. What other men say by word of mouth, he says with his organ. It is his confidant; his solace in perplexity; his means of expression.

The first "luxury" piece of furniture which he purchased when he saw clear financial skies, or before he actually saw them in fact, was an Estey parlor organ which moved with him from house to house for thirty-five years. To pay for this organ he ran an advertisement in the paper he was publishing at that time for an entire year! Every evening he would play on it. He walks to an organ instinctively, just as when he enters a room the first thing he in-

stinctively notices and turns to is the piano. He plays the piano as he does the organ, by ear, but he prefers the notes of the organ.

When he built his house at Wyncote, Pennsylvania, his first thought was the installation of an organ: then he rebuilt his house and added a music-room, in which he has to-day a superb instrument: a combination of a four-manual great, swell, choir, solo, antiphonal, and echo organ with one hundred and fifty-eight stops. The playing of this beautiful instrument is his daily delight.

When he wanted to give expression to his affection for his native city of Portland, he found it in the presentation of the organ now installed in the City Hall, which he created as a memorial to Hermann Kotzschmar, the beautiful tonal quality of which is known to the thousands of summer visitors passing through Portland every year, who hear the daily afternoon concerts, and to the citizens who flock every Sunday afternoon and crowd the three-thousand capacity auditorium to hear the people's concerts during the winter season. Over two hundred thousand persons hear these concerts each year. These latter concerts were of Mr. Curtis's own suggestion. He argued that a sacred concert was possible of popular

MR. CURTIS AT HIS FIRST HOME ORGAN WITH ONE OF HIS GRANDSONS

acceptance if it were interspersed with a brief address not to exceed ten minutes, and if the audience were given an opportunity to take part in singing two or three hymns. That he was correct in his sense of the popularity of these concerts finds evidence in the uniform size of the large audiences and in the humorous comment of the city's chief of police, who declared that on Sunday afternoons during the concerts the work of the police is at a standstill. "Everybody, including the thugs," he said, "seems to be at the concerts."

This organ is one of the largest instruments of its kind in the world. It consists of six separate organs: echo, solo, swell, great, orchestral, and pedal,—all being under the control of a single performer. There are more than six thousand pipes.

I was present on the occasion on August 22, 1912, when the organ was dedicated and first publicly played, and Mr. Curtis was invited as a special guest to present it to the municipality. The auditorium was crowded to the doors, and as Mr. Curtis advanced to the end of the platform he received an ovation, the audience rising to its feet in final tribute. I could not help thinking of the wonderfully romantic character of the occasion, as this audi-

ence stood to honor the man who in that same city not so many years before had been a boy selling newspapers on its streets!

He has recently offered to install in the new Victory Hall, in Philadelphia, now in course of design by the municipal government, the most beautiful and largest organ in the world as an expression of his affection for the city of his present activities.

Wherever he has gone he carried his love for music with him and shared it with others. As a boy in Boston he sang in a church choir as tenor. One day he was selected to sing at a Sunday-school convention in Tremont Temple in a quartet of which the soprano was the girl, Lillian Norton, whom, in later years, the world knew as Nordica. This incident was always used by Mr. Curtis when some one would ask him: "Don't you ever sing?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," he would reply, "I have sung with Nordica."

When he removed to Camden, New Jersey, he attended the First Presbyterian Church. He was not long an attendant there before the music and the choir got on his nerves. There was an indifferent organist, and the choir was composed of students. The excuse of the church was that it could not afford better material in

THE GREAT ORGAN IN THE PORTLAND, MAINE, CITY HALL

Presented to the city by Mr. Curtis as a memorial to Hermann Kotschzmar

the choir loft. Mr. Curtis argued that if there were better music it would attract people to come to the services and the church would benefit in memberships and collections. Finally the elders decided to leave the matter of a better choir with Mr. Curtis. He took up the quest of an organist just as he would find an editor or a business manager. He visited church after church in the vicinity, only to be disappointed. Finally, one Sunday morning he attended Saint Andrews's Episcopal Church, and the moment he heard the first strains of the organ he felt he had found his man. The impression became a conviction as the services progressed, and at the close he sought the organist, talked with him, and, as is his custom when he finds the man he wants, he engaged him on the spot. Having installed his organist, he began to build up the choir, member by member. All went well until he came to the tenor part, and then he had a long and futile chase. He heard voice after voice, only to be disappointed; and, in desperation, he resorted to another method of securing men in his business: he advertised for a tenor. And his first advertisement brought to him the voice he wanted!

He had doubled the cost of the choir to the church, *i. e.*, two thousand dollars a year, but

so attractive was the music that the church attendance began to grow. The music became such a pronounced feature of the services that the older elders complained that the services had been changed into Sunday concerts!

When he removed his place of residence to Wyncote, Pennsylvania, he attended the Episcopal Church, and there he found the same condition: an indifferent organist and practically no choir. Again he undertook the same work as with the Camden choir, and again he lifted the choir up to a distinctive musical standing. This time, however, he maintained the cost of the choir out of his own pocket, and this he did for years. It is a significant fact that the entire choir which he had built up in Camden made application to him in his quest for choir singers in Wyncote, and followed him in a body, although some of the members, living in Camden, had to travel miles each Sunday to Wyncote where they could walk blocks to the Camden church. But to this choir the wonderful little personality which they felt in the audience was gone when Mr. Curtis left Camden, and they wanted to sing to him wherever he went.

One day his daughter's teacher of music and harmony, Jean Paul Kürsteiner, said to her, when she had told him of her father's musical

gift of improvisation: "I think I might add considerably to your father's enjoyment of music and of his own playing if I were to give him an idea of simple harmony: I mean triads and their inversions and their relations to each other such as tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant."

The daughter thought so, too, and carried her teacher's wish to her father, who demurred and said something about teaching old dogs new tricks, etc. However, the "lesson" was arranged, Mr. Curtis being very careful to explain to his musical hearer that he knew nothing about music: that he really couldn't play, but that he did this simply to please his daughter.

This was the first time the music-teacher had heard Mr. Curtis play, and as the amateur organist went on, improvising at will, his listener's eyes grew larger and larger. After a while he turned to the daughter and said to her: "Positively, I have nothing to tell him. I have never heard anything like this in my life. He avoids instinctively every pitfall; he just *feels* right progressions; he never doubles thirds nor successive fifths. The man does nothing wrong. It is simply marvellous."

And when this was repeated to Mr. Curtis, he commented: "Bah! Nothing to it. Just

fingering a lot of chords. Half the time I don't know how I am going to get out!"

On another occasion Mr. Curtis was showing his new organ-room to Josef Hofmann, the pianist. Neither of the men made a move to play the instrument, each feeling that the other should play. Finally, Mr. Curtis was induced to play "just one tune." He went to the consol, but self-consciousness was upon him, and he could not play. "Just can't do it, you know," he explained, nodding toward Hofmann. Afterward, Mr. Curtis's daughter expressed regret to Hofmann of the fact that he had failed to get an idea of her father's skill at improvisation—he had played "Stille Nacht."

"Oh, yes, I did," replied the pianist, "I certainly did. The harmony at one point eluded him, and he supplied his own. That told me a lot: what he supplied was astonishing."

One incident, illustrating what the organ means to him and how he talks to it, and how it talks for him and expresses his deepest emotions, will always linger in the mind of the one person who unexpectedly became a witness of the scene. The funeral services over his mother's remains were held at his home. The casket rested in the organ-room. The services had been concluded; the friends had all gone.

The lid had not been closed on the casket when the son, alone, returned for a final glimpse of his mother's face. Then, instinctively, he went over to the organ consol and sat down. His fingers moved softly over the ivory keys, his head was turned toward the open casket, his eyes, wet with tears, were fixed on his mother's face, and there came from the soul of the organ the soul of the son. Seldom have such golden notes, sweet, caressing, and soft, filled with the soul of the player, come from a man's fingers as in those final moments of earthly meeting between son and mother.

What the tongue could not say in speech, the fingers were saying in notes tender and loving.

And thus he bade farewell to his mother!

CHAPTER VI

HIS LAST DAYS IN PORTLAND

WITH his printing plant swept away and his schooling interrupted by the great fire, the young Curtis, at sixteen, faced a full-time business career. He gave up his newspaper route in the early morning because the newspaper-offices were burned out and papers were few. He accepted a position as errand-boy in the dry-goods store of Leach, Bartlett, and Parker, at three dollars per week, his first job being to carry a huge bundle almost as large as himself on a blistering July day clear to the other end of the city. His newspaper work had accustomed him to heavy bundles, his legs were sturdy, his spirit was strong, and he persevered until his faithfulness in his errand work promoted him to a place as salesman behind the counter measuring out piece cotton goods by the yard. His popularity among the young people of the city helped him here,—it was not an uncommon sight to see a flock of girls at the "cotton counter," as it was called, being waited upon by the energetic and popular young

salesman. He was an attractive-looking boy, overflowing with a sense of humor. His quick brown eyes always sparkled. He was rapid in his movements, and filled his position behind the counter so acceptably that his salary was increased until he reached the high point of eight dollars per week.

His tastes in reading led along business lines, and he devoured any business stories that came his way. A weekly paper fell into his hands containing a story by Richard B. Kimball, then in the heyday of his writing career. Young Curtis was particularly impressed with this story. Without having an exact knowledge of business methods, of course, he felt somehow that Kimball reflected business as it might actually be in the world of affairs. He looked him up, and found he had written several books, nearly all stories of a businesss nature. He bought them all, and read them over and over. The reading of Kimball's books made an impression on the mind of the young lad that was to remain and to influence him all through his life. It proved later to be the foundation-stone upon which he was to build the most successful weekly magazine for men ever published in the United States. "I want business stories like Kimball's," he said when he bought *The Satur-*

day Evening Post. "I know business men will read them." And thus a boy's reading of one man's honest work brought forth a result little dreamed of by the author.

Another incident occurred to the boy in Portland which was destined to concern him very much in the future, although he was totally unconscious of it at the time. He strolled one evening into the reading-room of the United States Hotel, and saw lying on one of the tables a copy of one of the many colored lithographed pictures which George W. Childs was then having circulated broadcast throughout the country showing the new Public Ledger Building in Philadelphia. It was the first building ever erected in the United States entirely devoted to a newspaper plant and its offices, and the young Portland boy looked at it with undisguised admiration. It seemed to picture to him the greatness that a newspaper might achieve. He determined that some day he would go to Philadelphia and see the building for himself. Subsequently he read articles descriptive of the building, and one day being in New York City on business he said to himself: "Now is my chance to run over to Philadelphia and see the Ledger Building." He did so, and boarded a horse-car that would take him down

Chestnut Street. He remained on the back platform of the car, talking to the conductor. It was his first visit to Philadelphia, and he wanted to find out all he could about what he saw. The conductor was obliging, and the young stranger was much impressed with the courtesy of the carman. He left the car a block before his destination, and walked down Chestnut Street, and although he looked sharply where the conductor told him he would find the Ledger Building, he failed to find it. He reached Third Street, and then asked a policeman, who told him: "Why, you passed it. It is three blocks back. But here is the old Ledger Building where the paper used to be." And the policeman pointed to the building on the corner where was then published *The Public Record.* "Would you like to go in and see that?" asked the policeman. He was assured the young man would, and much to Curtis's surprise the policeman left his beat, took him into the building, and had him shown the plant. This was the second time he was impressed with the courtesy of the public servants in Philadelphia. "No Boston policeman would do that," thought the young visitor, and his mental impression of Philadelphia was most favorable.

He now walked back to Sixth Street, and as

he approached the corner he saw a realization of the picture he had seen, the lithograph having shown the broadside view of the building on Sixth Street. He stood on the opposite corner viewing the building with the fullest satisfaction, feeling that his trip from New York was amply repaid.

This was in 1873.

Exactly forty years thereafter the young man who had stood with such rapt admiration looking at the achievement attributed to George W. Childs, became the owner of the building, the newspaper which it housed, and all the machinery in it!

"Had you any dream or aspiration that day when you saw the building for the first time of ever owning it or *The Ledger?*" I asked Mr. Curtis once.

"Not in the remotest degree," he answered. "I never thought of such a thing."

And yet on the site of that very building and of the entire square which compasses it he has begun the erection of what unquestionably will be once again the finest and greatest newspaper plant in the United States, involving an expenditure of over ten millions of dollars!

No romance in business? Pray, what is that?

Meanwhile the boy was working toward his goal as a cotton-goods salesman in Portland. But it was not to be for long. He was nineteen years of age now, and an offer came to him as salesman in the dry-goods store of George R. Davis and Company, in Boston, at ten dollars per week.

That was two dollars per week more than he was earning in Portland; the position was in a larger city, and in Boston, the Mecca of every New England boy with ambition.

He decided to go. His parents offered no objection to the lad whose ambitions and qualities were unquestionably obvious to them. So in 1869 he left his native city to forge that career for himself which was to bring him there later as one of the most successful men in the United States, welcomed by all who knew him in his younger days.

CHAPTER VII

HIS FIRST DAYS IN BOSTON

"WHEN you left Portland did you carry any letters of introduction to Boston?" a friend asked Mr. Curtis once.

"No," he smilingly answered. "Didn't want any. If I couldn't make good of myself, I wasn't worth it."

Which recalls the same period in the life of Elihu Root when he left his father's home at Clinton, New York, to begin his career as a lawyer in New York City.

"I will give you some letters of introduction," said the father to his son.

"I would rather not have them," was the reply. "I want to find out for myself if I am a man or a mouse."

Young Curtis was to fall very naturally into the life of Boston. He had a fondness for the city; he had been there on business errands and knew its geography. His fondness for Boston baked beans was prodigious, and instead of only having them on the customary

Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings he could, with advantage to his palate, if not to his health, eat them twenty-one times per week.

His first act in reaching Boston was characteristic: he attended, next day, the South Congregationalist Church, where Edward Everett Hale preached, and there he engaged a regular sitting for himself, fixing his church home.

Then he took up his business in the Davis dry-goods store behind the counter. He had not been in that position long before he ran in the way of an offer made by an advertising agency of twenty-five per cent commission on all advertisements he might secure. He figured out at once that he did not need a full hour for his luncheon time, and he could use his noon-hour profitably in the pursuit of advertising. The first advertisement he secured was from the well-known Southmayd candy store of that day for a publication called *The Traveller's Guide.* It amounted to twenty-five dollars, which in turn meant six dollars and a quarter for young Curtis: a profitable piece of work, thought the young man for a half hour's work, while in his regular position he had to work an entire week for ten dollars. He forthwith decided to leave the dry-goods business and take up his old pursuit. But he counted without his employer,

who demurred and claimed that Curtis had agreed to stay for a year. The boy did not remember having put a fixed time of any sort in his letter from Portland accepting the position, but he felt complimented that his employer did not want him to leave. So he remained until his year was out, using his noon-hour to keep him in practice in the solicitation of advertisements.

At the end of this period he left the Davis store and gave his entire time to *The Traveller's Guide*. But there was no permanent basis to the publication: it had a gratuitous circulation, and after a short while the young advertising solicitor connected himself, on a commission basis, with the *Boston Times*, a daily paper with a Sunday edition. Here he was to come into direct contact with that dishonesty in business transactions which had been foreign to his mind and always has been to his career.

He had secured the advertisement of The Cunard Steamship Line for his paper at twenty dollars per week, giving him a weekly commission of five dollars. It was very desirable business for the paper, and the publisher was glad to have it. But as the weeks rolled by, and young Curtis's work for his five dollars consisted merely of calling at the steamship office for new copy or the order to repeat the copy

being used, the publisher decided that the work was not worth the commission, went to the Cunard office, and instructed that the copy would henceforth be delivered to himself when he called or sent. The Cunard representative reported this visit to young Curtis when he called, felt it was unjust to him, and asked what he wanted done about the matter.

"Write a letter to *The Times* discontinuing the advertisement," suggested the young solicitor, always ready with the solution of a problem.

The Cunard representative wrote the letter, and Curtis delivered it to his publisher with the added statement that he was leaving his employ. Needless to say, the publisher at once recognized his mistake, the matter was patched up, and Curtis remained. But the adjustment was to be only temporary. The same trick was again played upon the young solicitor, again he resigned, and once more the matter was arranged. "But after the same thing happened four more times," explains Mr. Curtis, "I made up my mind it was no place for me, and I quit, —the sixth time for good."

Young Curtis was going down-stairs on the day he left *The Times* when he met a friend coming up. "Just the man I am looking for,"

he said. "I want you to associate yourself with *The Independent*."

Of course, the young man was receptive to a new job, and he went over to *The Independent* office, talked the matter over, and started to work. But *The Independent* was one of those papers, of which there are so many, that have no sound reason for existence. It wabbled along. It was the toy of a man who had literary ambitions, believed he could write, but could give no evidence of that gift. It was not long before one of the attachés suggested that he and Curtis both leave *The Independent* and start a paper of their own, in mutual partnership.

This man promised to put twenty thousand dollars into the venture if young Curtis would get the advertisements and attend to the publication end. It was to be a weekly called *The People's Ledger*. The firm name was to be Thornton and Curtis. Here at last, thought the young man, was his dream come true: he would have a paper of which a part was his own property.

It was not long before the young publisher discovered that he was doing everything on the paper, on the editorial part as well as on the business end. He was the whole staff. He

had originated a policy: instead of publishing stories in serial form, which was then the universal custom of other publications, *The People's Ledger* stories were all complete in each number. The young editor would buy these stories for five and ten dollars each from Frederick Gleason, a well-known publisher of those days who issued an equally well-known periodical, *Gleason's Pictorial.* These stories had appeared in that weekly in the '40's. This feature began to get a respectable hearing for the paper and a consequent advertising patronage.

But thus far he had not seen any part of the twenty thousand dollars which his partner promised to put into the paper. And the paper needed some capital. It did not require much questioning on his part to find out that his partner did not have twenty thousand dollars, or any part of it, to put into the venture. He told a vague story of some marvellous mining stock which some day would net him a fortune. But as for ready cash he had none. Nor had he done any work on the paper. He explained this on the ground that he was extremely engrossed in a sewing-machine patent and that he had no time to bother with *The People's Ledger.*

"I'll sell out my interest in it to you for six hundred dollars," he proposed.

"Why six hundred dollars?" queried the young publisher. "You have nothing to sell. You haven't done a stroke of work on the paper. I have done it all."

"Oh, very well," was the answer. "I'll give you the thing. I'll drop out. You take it."

And so, in written form, it was agreed.

Cyrus Curtis thus became the sole proprietor of his first periodical, if we do not reckon *Young America.* This sounded very well, and there was a glow of satisfaction in the possession. But the fact remained that Curtis did not have a cent of capital. His paper was still weak. In winter it made a slight profit, but in the summer it had a way, as periodicals have a most uncomfortable way of doing, of dropping its circulation and incurring a deficit, since the printing bills of a periodical recur with the regularity of taxes.

Young Curtis was, in the vernacular of the day, "up against it."

Fortunately for his peace of mind at this time, his evenings were occupied in the pursuit of his favorite hobby, music.

For a year previous to 1872 thousands of young people in all parts of New England who had any voice at all were practising to fit themselves to take part in the World's Peace Jubilee, to be held in Boston during that year.

Young Curtis was led by his musical tastes to share in the great festival, and he joined one of the four sections of eight hundred voices each of the Boston choir. His wife-to-be was also in this choir, but the two had not then met, although at times the four sections would meet for massed practice in Boston's famous Music Hall.

When it came to the time for weeding out the voices for final appearance in the festival, young Curtis was alarmed. He could not read music, and he knew the trial would include a test on this score before Eben Tourjee, the choir-conductor. When the fateful moment arrived, and young Curtis's name was called, he went to the piano while Doctor Tourjee opened the score at random, and, placing the music on the rack, said: "Sing that!"

The young man fearsomely looked at the words, and to his joy saw that it was a part he knew and was particularly fond of. So with his eyes on the music-sheet on the rack, and with intense relief in his mind, he sang as he never had sung the part before him.

"That's all right," said the conductor. "Fine. You pass," little dreaming that the young man standing beside him had not been able to read a note of music.

And so young Curtis became a part of the

festival which still stands on record as the greatest of its kind ever held in the United States. It was a festival so huge as to fire the imagination of any young man, but particularly that of young Curtis, who even in these days always thought of events in the large. There were seventeen thousand voices in the choir of this marvellous Peace Festival! Back of this choir was a perfect regiment of orchestral players, and still another made up of brass bands, so that at times the mammoth stage would present the unprecedented picture of nearly twenty thousand performers,—more than could be massed in any single building in the United States to-day, including auditorium and stage.

The building itself has never been equalled in its mammoth proportions. It was called "The Coliseum," and stood upon a piece of triangular property between two railway lines west of Dartmouth Street,—parts of Irvington, Garrison, and Saint Botolph Streets now cover the space. It was erected for the festival, and in all thirty-one concerts were given from June 17 to July 4, 1872. Upon two occasions the audiences numbered fifty thousand, so that with the choir and orchestras the number of persons in the vast auditorium totalled nearly seventy thousand persons.

The festival was given to celebrate the feeling of peace after the close of the war in 1865.

There were 5,115 soprano voices; 4,258 alto; 3,592 tenors; 4,317 basses; a total of 17,282 voices. Fancy such a mammoth trained chorus singing the sextet from Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor" or "Nearer, My God, to Thee." The effect was at times overpowering. One hundred and ninety-two solo artists took part. These came from every part of the United States and Europe, and included names to conjure with in those days.

The combined orchestras and bands numbered over one thousand six hundred musicians, and on occasions when even this number was augmented by over one hundred Boston firemen, with their auxiliary force of fifty anvils in the "Anvil Chorus" from Verdi's "Il Trovatore," with a battery of cannon outside of the building fired by electricity, the spectacle was one to be ever remembered.

A great organ served as a background on the stage, and when its wonderful notes would be added to the grand ensemble in certain compositions "it was thrilling," Mr. Curtis says even to-day.

Independent of the festival orchestra, there

were eight hundred and sixty instrumentalists in the brass bands, both American and foreign.

The festival orchestra itself was the fullest and most complete organization ever assembled: it numbered eight hundred and twenty-nine players, apportioned as follows:

First Violins	200	Second Violins	150
Violas	100	Violoncellos	100
Contrabasses	100	Flutes	24
Clarionets	24	Oboes	20
Fagotti	20	Trumpets	24
French Horns	24	Trombones	24
Tubas	4	Tympani (pairs)	6
Side Drums	4	Bass Drums	2
Monster Drum	1	Triangles	2

Two festival balls were a feature of the season when Johann Strauss, the great waltz king, personally conducted an orchestra of nine hundred, and twenty-five thousand persons danced to the entrancing music of the "Blue Danube" and Strauss's other waltzes.

It was natural that a young man of the imagination and musical love of young Curtis should have desired to play a part in an event so momentous in musical history. For while Mr. Curtis is a wide reader, principally of biography and achievement, his love for music has been his chief interest in the fine arts. He has an

instinctive sense of appreciation of the beautiful in sculpture, and is quick to see and admire an exquisite carving in the marble. He is, to some extent, a lover of paintings, particularly those which portray or remind him of the coast of his native Maine, but he has never specialized in their study. He has never "gone in" for the old masters of painting, although he has them on the walls of his home. It is in music that he has always found his complete inner satisfaction.

CHAPTER VIII

IS THERE DISHONESTY IN BUSINESS?

THE experience which young Curtis met in his relation with the *Boston Times*, will be read by some young men as corroborative of what they have been told or heard about dishonesty in business. That there is dishonesty in business, no sane person will deny. But the charge that business is full of dishonesty is preposterous. Business could not go on if it were full of dishonesty, any more than marriage could go on if there were more unhappy than happy unions. What element of news is there in a happy married life? What newspaper would care to print in the morrow's issue on its first page an account of an idyl of happy home life? Unhappily, virtue has no news value. But a divorce has. So we have divorce after divorce flaunted before our eyes on the first pages of our newspapers,—unwisely so, in fact criminally, to my way of thinking, but there they are, "because people will read them." And they will. Likewise, will they read about dishonest practices in business, so

we have defalcations, sharp deals, and criminality in business served up to us also on the first pages of our newspapers. But by the same token as a happy home life could find no place in to-morrow's newspaper, neither could an account of an honestly conducted business. And yet for every dishonest man in business there are scores of honest men. But you do not read about them. They go their way quietly except when some original quality makes one here and there a subject for some special newspaper or magazine article.

"How much dishonesty is there really in business?" so many young men ask. The general answer is: Never so little as to-day. One cannot reduce a question of this sort to a mathematical basis, but, broadly speaking, if ten per cent of the business men are to-day flagrantly dishonest in practice it is the limit in number. Perhaps another ten per cent wink at dishonest practices, and are, therefore, equally culpable, and it is not unlikely there are another ten per cent who "trim corners," as it is called. But when you have acknowledged these percentages, and I would not by any means concede them, nor do I present them as fact but simple surmise, the total still leaves seventy per cent of the American business of to-day conducted

along sound and healthy lines of the strictest honesty.

The whole structure of business relations rests upon honesty: confidence in the word of one man upon the word of another. The first surprise that a young man receives upon entering business is the almost entire visual absence of money. This very fact proves there must be honesty in business, that integrity must be its very foundation. A man orders a thousand cars of coal; a thousand bales of cotton; a thousand tons of steel. The order is taken and accepted. Does the buyer see the coal, the cotton, or the steel, or does the seller exhibit them? The buyer depends upon the word of the seller that he has the product to deliver. The seller accepts the word of the buyer that he has the money to pay for what he buys or that he will have it in thirty or sixty or ninety days' time. The goods are delivered long before the day of payment. And even then payment comes not in money, but by check, simply a piece of paper expressing a man's word that he has the amount stated in a depository that may be thousands of miles away. The whole transaction is based upon confidence: men exchanged their word; actual money never entered into the matter.

It happened once while I was abroad that I became part of a transaction which made it necessary to have an amount in cash running far into six figures. Naturally my letter of credit was not sufficiently elastic, so I cabled over to a financial institution asking if the amount could be advanced to me for settlement sixty days hence upon my return. The answer came within twenty-four hours in the amount cabled over. My two sons were visibly impressed. Their joint thought was expressed in the exclamation: "That's easy!"

"Apparently," I explained, "but don't forget the years behind that apparent ease."

That is what integrity in business means and why it becomes its greatest asset: its value in time of need. It is at the moment of need that the reputation or character steadily built up in years is weighed in the balance, and then comes the acid test, in that single moment, of whether a man is found wanting.

The business world which listened or read will never forget the incident when the late J. Pierpont Morgan appeared before a Congressional Committee at Washington, and was asked what was the greatest credit asset in the financial world. And as a roomful of spectators and a tableful of press representatives, who

were to telegraph the answer to every part of the country, leaned forward to hear the reply, there rang out, like a pistol-shot, into the room so quiet that you could hear a pin drop, the one word: "Character."

Nothing that a man possesses in business is so delicately sensitive, nothing so easily disturbed, nothing so quickly shattered, nothing so intrinsically valuable to him in time of stress, as this one subtle, intangible thing we call credit. And yet nothing is so simply and easily built up and acquired: simple and easy because it calls for but one element—character, and character rests on honesty. Its difficulty with some lies in its absolute simplicity.

It is perfectly plain, therefore, that honesty must be the prevailing and dominating note in business. If the reverse were true, as is so often loosely stated or intimated, business would result in chaos. The fact is that never in the history of American business has there prevailed a higher standard of honesty or more inflexible rules of integrity. When one compares the loose methods practised in business only a decade ago with the scientific basis of business to-day, and when the volume of business is taken into consideration where the million is to-day a current figure instead of the thousand of the

past, the change is to the everlasting credit of the American business man. American business is to-day a synonym for integrity the world over, and the young man who comes into business to-day enters the marts of trade under conditions which make honest dealing easy and crooked relations abjured. No speaker or writer is more to be studiously disbelieved or carefully avoided than he who would paint a different picture of business as it is conducted to-day, or strive to lay emphasis upon the prevalence of dishonest practices. To the vast majority of business men of to-day a dishonest practice is an unknown factor in business, and by him rarely met in his dealings with other men. It is the man of dishonest or disordered mind himself who points out what he believes to be the blind spot in commerce, or he who, finding himself incompetent to keep up in the race, places the blame on practices which prevail with the minority and thus tries to cover up his own shortcomings. You never hear an honest successful business man complain of dishonesty in business. He does not know it, for, not practising it himself, it is never practised upon him, or, when it is, is rarely repeated. The crier of dishonesty in business will always bear watching.

CHAPTER IX

THE MAN WHO HELPED

WHEN young Curtis found himself with *The People's Ledger* as his sole property but with no capital to continue it, there came into his life a man who was to help him, and whom the young man was to help in later years,—a curious illustration of one of those reversals that accompany the turning of the wheel of time with which the annals of American business are filled, and which so wonderfully illuminate the characters of men.

The printer of *The People's Ledger* was a Scotchman named W. C. Allan, and to him the young periodical owner went and told his predicament. Little did the Scotchman know what he was building for himself when he answered: "That's all right, lad. You go right ahead: do the best you can, pay me what you can, and pay the rest when you can."

This evidence of confidence turned the tide in the career of Cyrus Curtis, as such little incidents will. It introduced the man who plays a part in almost every career, the man who is always around the corner and is ready to give

the one push into smoother water when a worthy young man, eager to work, stands on that inevitable rock which ever presents itself.

The Scotchman's faith rallied the young publisher from his depression, and he worked harder than ever to make both ends of his venture meet. He brought the circulation of his paper up to thirty thousand copies, but still he could not recoup the deficits with his printer. Then the Scotchman's health failed, he closed up his business, and went back to Scotland while young Curtis owed him a balance of eight hundred dollars.

"Pay it some day when you can," were his last words to his protégé in whom he had shown a steady faith at a financial loss to himself.

Thus the matter stood for years. But not beyond the time when Mr. Curtis began to feel himself on a sound financial footing. This was not until years after he had established *The Ladies' Home Journal.*

Then he made inquiries about his friend, the printer, but could find no trace of him. He had never returned to Boston from Scotland. But Mr. Curtis was not satisfied. He continued his inquiries until one day he was told that Allan had returned, and was living in Minneapolis. Mr. Curtis soon found himself in Chicago on

business, and then determined to keep on his way to "the Flour City," and try and seek out his old-time friend.

This was over fifteen years after the debt had been incurred.

Upon inquiry he discovered the old printer had a little real-estate business. He found the building, climbed the stairs to a little office near the roof, and when he entered the room found no one except a man in a closet shovelling coal.

"Mr. Allan's office?" asked Mr. Curtis.

"Yes, sir," answered the man over his shoulder.

The man emerged, and Mr. Curtis recognized his friend—much older, but still the same honest Scotch face.

"You don't recognize me?" asked Mr. Curtis.

Allan did not. Then the one-time struggling young publisher introduced himself.

"Well, well, it is you, is it?" genially asked the old man.

"I've come to pay that old debt of mine," said Mr. Curtis. And as neither of the men knew the amount, but the old Scotchman had his old ledgers at his house, the two went there and dug out the account. It was eight hun-

dred dollars, and with interest added, the sum was a tidy one. Mr. Curtis drew a check for the amount, and the old man's eyes filled with tears. Then he grew confidential. He had known thorny ways since his Boston days. His wife had been killed in a fire; he had returned to America with little cash and less health; he had known want; his advanced age was against him. He was keeping house with another old man, and then the truth came out that these two aged men were about to be turned out of their poor quarters. The old man's eyes overflowed as he thanked the man whom he had once befriended.

For years Allan lingered on, and every six months until 1921 a check went from Mr. Curtis to his old friend. Then he passed away. Mr. Curtis supported him to the very end, and met even the doctor's bills of his last illness and his burial expenses.

And thus did two men serve each other. Truly the old Scotchman had cast his bread upon the water!

Mr. Curtis now looked up a Bridgeport, Connecticut, silver concern which had sold him goods during his Boston days. He remembered indistinctly that there was an unpaid account against him with this firm. He called at the

New York office, and inquired about the old *People's Ledger* account. The bookkeeper sought the old ledgers, and finally the old account was unearthed.

"It is here," said the bookkeeper, "but it has long since been written off."

"What is the amount?" asked Mr. Curtis.

The bookkeeper told him.

"And the interest to date?" was the next question.

When this had been figured up, Mr. Curtis drew his check-book and gave a check to the astonished bookkeeper for the full amount.

"A little late in settling it," commented Mr. Curtis, "but it is settled."

A member of the firm had been standing by and listening to the conversation without taking part in it. Now he introduced himself, and expressed surprise at Mr. Curtis's action, saying it was the first time in the history of the firm that a "dead" account had been settled in this way. "It is going to be our pleasure," ended the official, as he shook hands with Mr. Curtis, "to send you the finest set of silver it is possible for our firm to make."

Some time passed. Mr. Curtis had long ago forgotten the remark which he had accepted as a pleasantry, when one day a huge box came to him. In it was a wonderful service in silver.

"It must have cost more than the entire bill, interest and all," said Mr. Curtis.

Never for a moment did Mr. Curtis think he had done anything out of the ordinary, and is always frankly surprised when these instances are cited to him as unusual acts.

"I owed the money," is his simple comment, "and I paid it."

When the young Curtis as the owner of *The People's Ledger* found himself without a printer in Boston, he journeyed to New York and found he could get his paper printed more economically there by The New York Newspaper Union, and accordingly made arrangements with this concern. It was not so convenient, but every penny counted, and the saving, for the struggling young publisher, meant much.

His tireless energy with his paper began to bring moderate results, and he concluded to have better offices for his paper. He chose a central location in Congress Street, moved his few chattels to his new office and left on a Saturday evening exhausted with his work, but with the furniture arranged and everything ready for a new start on Monday morning. That evening, in 1872, the great Boston fire broke out, swept over a large part of the city, burning all of Sunday, and by Sunday evening the young publisher's new office and all his carefully ar-

ranged effects were in ruins. For the second time he was a figure and suffered loss in a great fire. This time, however, he had to go on with his periodical, and on Monday he engaged another office on Washington Street, and once more opened up for business.

Business for his paper took him to Philadelphia four years later, and as the 1876 Centennial was in progress, he visited the exposition. His liking for the city increased on this visit, and making some inquiries about printing costs, he found he could print *The People's Ledger* at a saving of fifteen hundred dollars per year. "I figured that I could live on this saving," he decided, and forthwith he made arrangements to move his paper to Philadelphia.

It is a curious coincidence that he closed this first arrangement to print his paper in Philadelphia in the office of The Central Newspaper Union, in the German Demokrat Building on Chestnut Street, between Fifth and Sixth Streets, the same room now occupied by a barber's shop where Mr. Curtis gets his hair trimmed, and in the building which he now owns!

CHAPTER X

THE OTHER HALF

IT had dawned upon young Curtis a year before his decision to move to Philadelphia that man was not made to live alone. He had made the acquaintance of Louisa Knapp, a Boston girl, and with very little but hopes and an ambition to succeed on his part, and complete faith in her fiancé on hers, the two were married on March 10, 1875.

He doubtless had dreams of what a wife might mean to a man in a determination to win his way in the world, but he could scarcely have had any true conception of the actual part which his young wife was to play in his life.

The average woman thinks of business as a pretty dull occupation: the average wife is sure of it. She tries her best, as a young wife, to profess an interest in her husband's problems when, full of his affairs of the day, he comes home and pours them into her ears. But after she has had this for five or six years she turns with relief to her babies or her home duties or to the gossip of her neighbors. Her eyes begin

to narrow about nine o'clock, when her husband is just about getting up steam in his narrative to her of some deal he is putting through, and she concludes, and confides her conclusion to her mother or some friend, that "it is always business, business with Dick" and that she "gets so everlastingly tired of it"; that the friends he brings home are "all business friends who talk nothing but business"; that it is all so dry, so uninteresting, and so deadly pokey. And, if she is particularly unintelligent, she decides that business is "stupid." It is never she who is stupid; it is never her mind that fails to realize that the absorption of her husband in his struggle is for her and her children; it is never through her lack of imagination that she fails to see the romantic element in her husband's adventures.

And that is why we see so many unsuccessful men; men who become discouraged in face of the lack of stimulus from their wives in their attempt to rise in the world: no attention, no encouragement, no response. Or we find the man gradually locking himself up and living within himself, conscious that he evokes no interest from his wife; and he forges ahead in the world, while his wife, unable or unwilling to keep step with him, lags behind or stands

still, busying herself with the inconsequentials and placing emphasis on the wrong points of life. Then we see the pathetic picture that all too often presents itself in American homes of successful men, where the wife is not the equal of the husband, and cannot hold her own in the enlarged sphere which her husband has entered. It would seem as if woman, with the romantic side of her nature so much more developed, would sense the romance in business and glimpse the adventuresome spirit that pervades the mart and is the weapon of the conqueror. But she rarely does. Where she does, however, and sympathetically and intelligently shares her husband's adventures, and enters into them with all of a woman's unerring instinct (and no instinct is truer than that of a woman where the interests of the man she loves are at stake), the combination is well-nigh irresistible and the result inevitable. A woman either makes or breaks a man, and of no relation in life is this so true as in that of husband and wife. The world of men who have made their mark presents few instances (I don't know of a single one, personally, although there may be such, strongly as I doubt it) back of which there is not a woman's subtle influence of guidance and encouragement. It may be a mother,

wife, sister, daughter; the relation matters not. Sometimes it is a memory, but somewhere back of every successful career is the figure of a woman. Few men there are who will deny this indebtedness.

It was the good fortune of young Curtis to meet a woman who could and would keep pace with his restless nature, and then be selected by her as her husband. For while some men have a pleasing notion that they pick out their wives, the preponderance of practical experience is on the other side of the argument: the girl picks him first, and then he completes the selection. Just so in married life he feels that he does the managing, while all the time he is being subtly but surely managed,—and for his good.

And so it came about that young Curtis was married to Louisa Knapp. She came of a New England family, with residence in Boston, and from the moment of their marriage they became in fact and in spirit equal partners in their determination to find a place in the sun. The young wife had worked beside Doctor Samuel G. Howe, of standing himself as well as his wife Julia Ward Howe, as private secretary; and so, in a measure, the workings of a man's mind in action were not a new revelation to the

MRS. CURTIS

(*Louisa Knapp*)

young Mrs. Curtis. She immediately took her place at her husband's side, and there she remained through all the thirty-five years of married life which were granted the pair.

On August 6, 1876, a daughter, Mary Louise, was born to the couple, and the husband and father felt a new impetus to push him to success. And on Thanksgiving Day, in 1876, three months after the birth of her daughter, the wife was willing that her husband should close the New England chapter in his life, and move to Philadelphia; and so began that part of his career for which his experiences in Boston had been in the nature of a training.

The wife, in her new home, now filled the triple rôle of mother, wife, and counsellor. She suggested and advised, guided and encouraged, and never did the latest attempt on the part of the young husband fall upon deaf or unresponsive ears. Always alert to his interests, she counselled so that attempt crystallized into achievement in his hands. With one side of her nature given over to the care of her daughter, she devoted the other side to the advancement of her husband and his every interest. She wrote, she edited, she conceived and practically tested countless domestic intricacies before she gave them to the public. She com-

mandeered the services of her two sisters in her work for her husband; she was never too busy domestically to turn and give her undivided attention to some unsolved problem which he would put before her. There was always an extra seat at the table for some business friend whom he would unexpectedly bring home. She made her life elastic, ever pliable in one direction, and yet never for a moment did she neglect or evade her duty as a mother. In fact, it was this growing sense of her maternal duty which led her to realize that her daughter's welfare must be her sole thought. Fortunately, this conviction came when her husband was well along the path of his success, and then as expeditiously and fully as she had undertaken her joint responsibilities with her husband, she relinquished them to devote herself to her daughter.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHANCES YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

I WOULD ask the reader of this book, particularly if he is a young man, to pause here and note a very important fact in Mr. Curtis's life. He was now twenty-six years of age. He had left school at the age of sixteen, and had thus been at work for ten years.

Now the average young man when reading the life of a successful man is very apt to pick out some special point of advantage in that life, compare it with his own situation, and then attempt to prove to himself that he is at a disadvantage.

Can any young man find such a reason for discouraging comparison in Mr. Curtis's life thus far? There is not the slightest evidence thus far in what the young Curtis had done to show any extraordinary ability; no trace of what we are so foolishly inclined to call "genius." He surely had no particular advantage of education. He did not come from a home of means. No one had loaned him money. He had merely demonstrated that he was an average boy, who tried and failed to find his niche and then

changed and tried again. He had not done a single thing that any alert-minded and ambitious boy of ordinary intelligence and ability could not do. At twenty-six years of age, when the average young man wonders if he should not have found his niche, Mr. Curtis had still to find his place; indeed he had still to find even the scene of his future success. The notion that success is only for the fortunate or the unusually gifted young man certainly finds no corroboration here.

One point only had he demonstrated thus far. But it happens to be a point well worthy of the attention of every young man: that success is not made overnight, and that there is no royal road to it. As newsboy, as salesman, as advertising solicitor young Curtis had shown the willingness to work, and to work hard. When a boy is willing, for four summers and winters, to rise at quarter to four o'clock in the morning to serve a newspaper route, and not have his breakfast until seven o'clock, he shows by that quality that he has the right conception of the way to success.

I ask a young man, reading this, to rest his mind for a moment on this point, because I am anxious to get it well into his consciousness that success is not a matter of chance or of luck; or that there is some mystery about it that he

cannot unravel. The twenty-six years of this New England boy's life as sketched here must effectively disprove the fallacy of such a notion. All that he was doing during these years was learning; gathering experience for the years ahead of him; laying the foundation for the career that was to be his,—a period of absorption that must be in every man's life; a time when he takes in so that he may give out later; when he learns the valuable lesson of taking orders so that he may wisely give orders; when he learns what the positions all along the line mean by actual experience in them.

While a young man may be convinced of this fact, perhaps, as I hope he may upon considering Mr. Curtis's life thus far, he may still persist and say: "This is all very well. Perhaps it is true. But isn't it also true that the chances were better when Mr. Curtis was young than they are now?"

Exactly the same question was asked forty years ago by the boys who then read the life of some man who had achieved success, and precisely the same question will be asked forty years hence by those who will read of the men who as boys to-day are carving the way to success.

It is a favorite theory that gives to one era

a greater number of opportunities than to another: there was less competition, it is pointed out, fewer aspirants for the same position; men thought in smaller and more attainable units, and so on and so on. Whereas, as a matter of fact, the chances are precisely the same in number and possibilities at one time as another. If anything, I should say the chances for the young man of to-day are far more numerous than they were forty years ago; certainly the opportunities are more varied and larger in scope. Changing conditions almost invariably increase opportunities, rarely do they contract them. The economic scheme is simply a question of supply and demand. I cannot recall within my lifetime when the actual demand for men of ability is so keen and the supply so inadequate. Executive positions are seeking men as never before. High-salaried men are at a premium in every line. The greater undertakings of to-day, with expanding markets, call for not only greater men, but a larger number of men, and everywhere one hears of large undertakings being halted from lack of men who can measure up to the chances. This has, of course, always been so; demand is greater than supply; a national condition is only healthy when this is true: demand should always exceed supply,

else initiative is discouraged. I cannot but feel, however, that these times are peculiarly propitious for achievement in every line than any previous time in the history of this country. It would seem true, as one looks carefully around, that the proportion of outstanding men in all the professions and trades are fewer. It may be that the world of affairs is in greater need of the average than of the exceptional man: men keen in their faculties of diagnosis firmly believe the times call for more common sense than brilliancy. But leaders there always must be, and, in comparison with the times, certainly the leaders are few.

This does not mean for one moment that success is easier of achievement. Success was never easy and never will be anywhere or at any time. It is a favorite theory held by many that success is easier in our country, for instance, than in some of the countries of Europe. But the facts do not bear out this theory. Opportunities there may be more in one nation than in another: different conditions may make attainment simpler, but actual achievement is not a whit easier in the United States than in any other nation on the face of the earth. A young man, to achieve, must first get out of his mind any notion either of the ease or rapidity

of success. If success were easy it would not be worth having once attained, nor if it could be rapidly achieved would it have any worth. We value most in this world the thing that comes hardest: money easily earned is easily spent: but not so with money that is earned by effort. Nor does success ever *happen*. Nothing ever just happens in this world: everything is brought about. Success never comes to a man of its own volition: it will meet a man halfway, but it will never come to him all the way.

I am firm in the conviction that the successes made in the past or present will seem as naught compared with the successes to be made by our sons in the future. Every man functions according to the time in which he lives. But think of how the world is progressing; how the ingenuity of men is opening up avenues hitherto closed; how the world is thinking in figures such as the mind dreamed not of fifty years ago. World conditions are changing more rapidly than they ever did, and so they will in the future. All this means larger opportunities. The fundamentals of success will remain: they are inexorable: principles never change, but the magnitude of opportunities and of achievement are to receive tremendous enlargement. Our sons will deal in figures which

we know not of to-day: the magnitude of their achievements will eclipse our achievements just as our achievements compare favorably with those of yesterday. The world will move more rapidly. All this means a larger demand: a wider vision, broader mental grasp, greater personal courage,—all of which means bigger men.

The young man of to-day need not hesitate as to his opportunities: he need not stop and wonder whether they are less or more than they were. They are numerous enough for him and several hundreds like him, and they are sizable enough to absorb the very highest quality of ability that he can bring to seize the chance which in particular attracts him.

But he must enter the arena with a spirit of joyous enthusiasm, with clear optimism, with a feeling that here is a game as full of fascination, romance, and adventure as any which he has ever played, or read of, or dreamed about. Romance there is without stint; adventure to thrill and satisfy the most adventuresome. That is why so many men remain in business long after they have amassed a competency: not solely for the love of money nor for the desire to accumulate more, but for the love of the game.

Think of the personal attributes that the

adventure of business calls for—integrity, alertness, judgment, discernment, imagination, determination, and, above all, personal courage, —and what remains in a man's mental, physical, moral, or spiritual armor? No game ever conceived by man is filled with such wonderful elements; so rich in education; so broadening in all that makes for the finest humanity; so satisfying in its opportunities for uprightness. It is all there and in endless abundance.

What is more, the game is perfectly simple if correctly played. Men make it difficult because of needless complication, but, of itself, it is not difficult. Mr. Curtis kept it simple. So can any man who will keep his mind simple and his spirit true. Nor is the game ever dull. It has its times when it is not as colorful as at other times, but that is simply reflective of life. We do not spend our lives on the mountain peaks; we could not stand it; the air is too rarefied. Most of our days must be spent in the valleys, but the valley does not spell dulness. The view from Mont Blanc is overpowering in its marvellous extent, but that does not make the vista down the Rhone Valley the less wonderful in its gentler beauty and softer intimacy. We could not exist on the summit, we can in the valley.

CHAPTER XII

PHILADELPHIA BEGINNINGS

IT is a fact worth noting that Mr. Curtis did exactly what Benjamin Franklin, whose successor he was destined to be in the publication of *The Saturday Evening Post*, had done years before: he had come from Boston, not to New York, as so many young men would naturally have done without thinking, but to Philadelphia.

"Why didn't you go to New York?" I asked him once. "You were printing your paper there: it was your chief market for national advertising."

"Because for one thing," he answered, "I could get my paper more cheaply printed in Philadelphia than in New York. Then, too, I didn't care to live in New York: I didn't like it, and I did like Philadelphia. I wanted to be nearer New York than Boston, but not of it." And then came the shrewd observation that thousands of young men with the lure of New York upon them may well take to heart: "I figured, too, that a man can make a greater

success a little away from a big metropolis, by throwing his light upon it, than by being in it and in all probability lost in the thousands of others."

The first office which Mr. Curtis set up in Philadelphia for *The People's Ledger* was at 713 Sansom Street, and there he published his paper until 1878. Then he sold it to the firm of Selden Brothers, and when the senior member of the firm passed away the paper ceased.

The publishers of *The Philadelphia Press* now made an offer to Mr. Curtis that he should take charge of their weekly edition. It was the custom of newspapers of that day to have weekly editions, and this adjunct of *The Press* had received little or no attention. No one was interested in it; no one understood it or the reason for its existence. It had a circulation of thirty-five thousand copies in the interior section of Pennsylvania, but the only advertisements it carried were half a dozen small announcements tucked away at the bottom of the last column on the last page of the paper. *The Press* publisher offered Mr. Curtis a salary of fifteen dollars per week and a commission of twenty-five per cent on all advertisements which he might secure.

The new advertising manager looked over

the contents of the paper and found that the first page was given over to a department on horticultural and agricultural topics written by Thomas Meehan. Mr. Curtis read the material, and, so far as he could gauge its quality, it appealed to him as very good. Then he looked up the standing of Meehan, only to find that he was one of the best-known authorities on the subjects he wrote about; was, in fact, the authority in his special line. Always on the alert for a personality which he could make the centre of an enterprise, Mr. Curtis determined that *The Press* people had not appreciated the value of their contributor and that he would "feature" him. Typewriting machines were not in use in those days, so Mr. Curtis drafted a letter to advertisers whose announcements he cut from papers in the field of the weekly *Press*, engaged a score of girls, and sent out hundreds of handwritten letters to prospective advertisers, pointing out to them the opportunity they had overlooked in their failure to use this particular advertising medium. Day after day the letters flowed out of the office into the offices of the advertisers, national and local. It was not long before results began to come in. Within two months, the advertising manager had filled the entire back page of the paper with

advertisements. Another sixty days saw the preceding page filled, and within six months he had broken into the third page with two columns of advertisements.

Mr. Curtis's sister, Florence Gertrude Curtis, had just been married to a Massachusetts banker, Hamilton Mayo, of Leominster, and the bridal couple came to Philadelphia for a visit to the brother's family. The advertising manager was rather proud of the success he was having on *The Press*, and mentioned the fact to his new brother-in-law.

"That's all very fine," was the banker's reply, "but you are making the largest share of the returns from your work for some one else. You ought now to have a paper of your own, and make a hundred per cent of the returns for yourself. You should strike out for yourself."

Mr. Curtis was making a bare living for his wife and little daughter, and told his brother-in-law so. "Your idea is all right," he added, "but it takes capital to start a paper of your own, and I haven't the capital."

And then came to Mr. Curtis the first direct offer of financial aid he had up to that time received, the Allan printing account being in the nature of credit. The young man had demonstrated his activity and willingness to work, and

the Yankee banker knew this, and, as happens in such cases where the will is present and the determination proven, he was willing to back his faith with his help.

"I'll help you there," said Mr. Mayo. And the two talked it over.

The result was that *The Press* lost its energetic young advertising manager when a check came to him from his brother-in-law for two thousand dollars, "to start the ball rolling."

This was in the latter part of 1879.

"That was more money than I had ever seen at any one time," says Mr. Curtis, in telling of what was destined to be a turning-point in his career. "Two thousand dollars! I looked at the check with wonder that a man could draw one for that amount! It seemed endless and inexhaustible! Of course, there was nothing to do but to start in and begin to try and spend it!"

Mr. Curtis decided he would establish a four-page weekly to be called *The Tribune and Farmer*, at fifty cents a year. His first move was to lay his plan before Mr. Meehan, and offer him the star contributorship on the new paper. Meehan had been signally surprised at the suddenness with which he had been hauled out of obscurity on the weekly *Press* staff to be

featured in letters and advertisements, and he was naturally attracted by the progressive methods of the young publisher. He immediately accepted. Mr. Curtis engaged a small room in the building at the corner of Fifth and Chestnut Streets, and there he installed his new editor, himself, and a clerk. He pursued the same methods as those he had applied to *The Press*, by writing to all his advertisers, and telling them that Mr. Meehan had outgrown the weekly edition of a daily newspaper and was now to be editor of a distinct publication. He gave Mr. Meehan the entire first page of the paper, featured him as before, and in a short time subscribers and advertisers began to respond to his energetic efforts.

A good part of the advertising in the new paper was placed in it by an advertising agent, who believed in the paper and its owner, and was willing to give him credit for his commissions. This credit continued until Mr. Curtis owed him about eight hundred dollars, when the advertising agent suggested that instead of having his account paid in cash, he was willing to take in exchange for it a small interest in the paper. Mr. Curtis favored the idea, for he believed it would be a good business move to have an advertising agent, handling quite a

few accounts, feel a sense of proprietorship in the paper;—and, incidentally, it would wipe out his largest indebtedness. He laid the idea before his "special silent partner," Mr. Mayo, and the banker agreed with the young publisher that it was worth trying, and suggested a quarter interest in the paper, which proved acceptable to the advertising man.

The advertising agent had been admitted into partnership only a few days when he laid before Mr. Curtis a subscription scheme which "would sweep the country." He argued that, as Mr. Curtis was going, he would be at it until his hair turned gray. "This scheme," he explained, "will bring us a killing at once." But Mr. Curtis didn't like the scheme,—it wasn't sound: it smacked too much of a lottery scheme; it was on the verge of a swindle—and he told his junior partner so who demurred, argued that it was all right, would bring in a pile of money, and plead for a trial of it. But he left Mr. Curtis not only unconvinced, but disturbed at the mental attitude of his new partner. He didn't like the scheme, and began to be shaken in his confidence in its author.

It happened that on the third page of *The Tribune and Farmer* Mr. Curtis had begun a column of selected matter called "Women and

Home." He clipped its contents each week from what he deemed reliable exchanges, but each week when he brought his paper home Mrs. Curtis would poke quiet fun at the column, one time saying its contents were ridiculous, and, at another time, that the material was incorrect.

"Who gets up this column?" she asked her husband one evening.

"I do," was the answer. The wife smiled.

"I don't mean to make fun of you," she said; "but if you really knew how funny this material sounds to a woman, you would laugh, too."

Then she laughed. It is curious how small incidents sway our futures, and Mr. Curtis never dreamed for a moment that in his wife's laugh was hidden his first great success! No man naturally likes to have his effort laughed at by his wife. But the husband's sense of humor came to his rescue, as he rejoined: "Well, if you think you can do it any better, why don't you try it?"

"I will," was the instant reply. And after that the husband brought the exchanges home for his wife to clip.

"That's all very well," she argued, "but you are always reprinting old material by this method. What you want is material of your

own: originally written for you. You can only be a success by being yourself."

So the wife-editor began to write herself and to get others to do likewise; and after a while the column grew to an entire page. Comments were more frequent about the woman's department than of any other part of the paper, correspondence began to come in, and Mr. Curtis began to look at the page with increasing interest.

Meanwhile, his junior partner never lost an opportunity to press the adoption of his get-rich-quick offer. Seeing that Mr. Curtis did not approve of it in its original form, he modified its terms and changed it in every way he could to secure his partner's adoption of it. But Mr. Curtis held to his ground that the offer was not fundamentally sound, and he would rather pursue his way along straight lines, and so build up his paper on a permanent basis, than to adopt any scheme that might be quicker in its results but savored of the wild-cat type.

The partner's persistence with his doubtful plan continued to give Mr. Curtis increasing anxiety as to the honest purposes of his partner, however, and he determined to find an anchor to the windward.

The success of the woman's department continued, and Mr. Curtis decided to enlarge it

into a supplement which would have an identity of its own, and yet be given once a month with *The Tribune and Farmer.* His wife warmly seconded his suggestion, and promised to edit it, and in December, 1883, there appeared the first issue of the supplement. It consisted of eight pages of domestic articles. Mr. Curtis had notified his junior partner, who did not believe in this departure, that this supplement was to be his own property, in the expense of which the partner would not be asked to share, —nor, of course, would he share in the profits, if there were any. The subscription price of the supplement, where taken separately, was to be fifty cents a year.

When Mrs. Curtis had prepared the material for the first number of the supplement, and her husband had taken it to the office to be set into type, the head of the composing-room asked him what he wanted to call the supplement. If it was to be a separate unit, he argued, it should have a means of identification.

Mr. Curtis was busy, and couldn't let his mind rest on this detail. So he answered: "Call it anything you like. It's a sort of a ladies' journal."

The composition head carried this thought to an engraver whom he asked to draw a heading

for the supplement. He did so, engraving the words *The Ladies' Journal* as a title, and then, to indicate the character of the contents of the supplement, added between the centre words of the title a picture of a home, and engraved the word "Home" under it. The first subscription which came in for the supplement asked for *The Ladies' Home Journal*, and all subscriptions named the periodical in like form.

The success of the "supplement" was instantaneous. While in five years, *The Tribune and Farmer* had accumulated forty-eight thousand subscriptions, the newcomer received twenty-five thousand separate subscriptions of its own in its first year.

It was at the end of this first year that Mr. Curtis's junior partner, at the annual meeting of the firm, made a casual remark that the supplement in which he was not interested seemed to him to be receiving a good deal of the attention of his partner and of the office force. The single office had been expanded to two rooms, then to three, and finally to the entire floor.

Mr. Curtis felt that the time had come to reach an understanding with his partner, who was still periodically presenting his now time-worn scheme for adoption.

"Look here," said Mr. Curtis one day, "I'll

tell you what I'll do. You take *The Tribune and Farmer* as your own sole property, wipe the slate of our indebtedness to you, leave me the plant of type we have accumulated, and I'll go ahead with the supplement."

"Done," was the reply. The next day the necessary legal documents were drawn up, the partnership was dissolved, and the junior partner took *The Tribune and Farmer* to New York City, where he published it for a few months, when both he and the paper disappeared.

And meanwhile, Mr. Curtis, with a sense of intense relief, and left with *The Ladies' Home Journal* as his sole property, engaged another floor of the building where he was located, and prepared to make a success of the accident upon which he had stumbled and the weapon he had so well fashioned as an anchor to the windward whereby he could start out for himself.

His rigid adherence to a policy of the strictest integrity with the public had been rewarded, unconsciously to himself, with the establishment of what was to prove his first great success, and the greatest success in its line that the publishing world had ever seen!

CHAPTER XIII

"YE MUST BE BORN ANEW"

WHEN Mr. Curtis reached the age of fifty, in 1900, he found that the strain of work had told upon his physical condition, as it does upon so many men who fail to realize that what is possible and perhaps permissible at forty is fraught with danger ten years later. Mr. Curtis's realization came when he applied for some additional life insurance, and was refused! He tried two other companies, with the same result.

With characteristic directness, Mr. Curtis took an inventory of himself, and decided that the remedy was in his own hands rather than in those of his physician. His self-diagnosis resulted in three conclusions:

First: He would absolutely control his nervous tendencies.

Second: He would become a confirmed drinker,—of water.

Third: He would ease off on business and find more and frequent recreation away from his desk.

Then with exactly the same simple directness with which he managed his business affairs, he began to manage himself.

His temperament was distinctly of the nervous order. He was restless and impatient of delay. If his luncheon were not ready on the moment of one o'clock (he lunched at home), if service at the table failed to begin at one minute after, he would begin a systematic drumming and tapping on the table, pull out his watch, and look inquiringly at his wife, until she and their daughter were in a nervous ferment. His demeanor in business was the same: everything must move with despatch; a delay, however slight, was the signal for impatience and irritation. Of course, all this had a marked effect on his health: he was never inwardly quiet and at rest; his restless mind brought about indigestion, and he was beginning to pay the price which inevitably follows. An entire mental readjustment under these conditions is not a simple matter: it calls for a self-control and personal discipline which few possess. The habits of fifty years are not shaken off in a day. The peskiest things in the human body to control are the nerves, but Mr. Curtis made up his mind to outwit them. And he did. It was gradual at first, but as the months went by a

quieter demeanor became more and more apparent. The mind slowly became the master of the nerve, so that after a few years the victory was complete. Mr. Curtis had become a marvellous example of quiet self-possession. He is as active at seventy-three as he was at forty-three: his health is excellent where once it was threatened; his every motion is quick, but of the muscle, not of the nerve, and life-insurance companies to-day bid for policies on his life.

Coincident with his battle for self-control, he literally took to water. A bottle of water became a fixture on his desk, his dressing-table, his wash-stand,—everywhere his hand reached out he encountered a reminder of his decision. For twenty years he has kept this up; the water-bottle is to-day in evidence just as on the day when he began.

At the same time he bought a country place at Wyncote, Pennsylvania, and thus secured refuge where he could get out into the fresh air, sleep in a pure atmosphere, and fall more easily to the lure of outdoor exercise. By reason of his early excursion into work in boyhood days, he had been denied at first hand knowledge of sports. Baseball was an unknown game to him, tennis was too strenuous, golf had in

those days not come into its own. So he bought a horse, climbed on its back and rode each day through the countryside in order to "get a good shaking up." He got it. But he persistently kept at it, until his finances permitted him to turn oceanward. He began a series of trips to Europe, and this was a natural road which led to his favorite sport of yachting. He bought a small yacht and at the same time went back to his native State and air, and bought a country-seat on the Penobscot Bay at Camden, Maine. The yacht soon began to impress upon him its limitations and, dissatisfied with another man's idea of a yacht, he built a yacht of his own. Soon he outgrew this yacht, sold it and built a second one,—larger again. When the Great War came the Government felt it could put his yacht to a more practical use, and again he built another one,—a third, and once more larger. This is the present *Lyndonia*,—one of the largest pleasure-yachts in the United States.

His enjoyment of the water is so keen that his mental attitude toward it refuses to allow him to believe that there is such a thing as seasickness. No boat can pitch or roll enough to please him, and the rougher the weather the happier he is.

MR. CURTIS'S HOME AT WYNCOTE, PENNSYLVANIA

Golf had meanwhile come to Mr. Curtis's attention. He bought some land adjacent to his Wyncote estate, had a professional golf course laid out, so that he could step out of his own door upon the first tee, and began a daily round of golf.

Always agile on his feet, he made them do him service for his health. Where other men rode, he walked. A quiet saunter for him today extends from his hotel in up-town New York to the down-town business district to attend a meeting. If he has attended a dinner in New York, he walks back to his hotel, no matter what the hour. He explains that he learned to walk as a newsboy, and never got over the habit.

Of course, all these outdoor activities had a natural effect upon his third resolution: to slough off business. He began systematically to shun detail by passing it on to others. Letters he marked for other hands to answer. "I pay others to work," became his motto, and no matter how important the matter, the meeting, or the occasion, Mr. Curtis's watch would come out at a certain time in the afternoon, the roller top of his desk would be banged down, and he would go for an hour or two on horseback or at golf before the evening meal. I have seen him

pursue this course under the most unusual conditions. In the middle of a conference or meeting, when it would not occur to any other man to leave, Mr. Curtis would quietly walk out of the room and not return. The pursuit of his own health became an inexorable rule with him, and at the same time he was training his executives to function without him. Again and again have I seen him absent himself at what seemed to others critical times in his affairs; not absences for a day or a week, but for months at a time. In fact, he seemed to have a faculty for choosing such times for his absences, leaving the most important matters to be settled by others. And true to his instinct, they were settled. "It is just how you accustom people," he once said: "they'll lean on you all the time if you let them. Go away, and they can't. They have to do for themselves. That's the way you test them and the strength of your organization at the same time." He would try to pass on his idea of shoving off details to those associated with him.

"I am going to Europe next month," he said to me. "Better come along. You need it. Let the other editors do your work."

I protested that my work was different from his and that it was not so simple a matter as he thought for an editor to leave his desk.

"Nonsense," he retorted. "It all depends on your own mental attitude and how you train your staff."

I went with him not only on that trip, but on several others, and the progress of the work during my absence proved his point.

"When a man feels he can't leave the organization he has built up," he said to me once, "it proves him to be a poor organizer. The trouble lies with him: not with the organization."

There was an amusing side to these joint trips of ours. He would of course receive letters from his wife and daughter, and certain signals had already passed between the latter and myself to lead to mutual thoughts. I was more than curious to know what was in these letters, but of course I could not ask and he ventured no information, as it had never for a moment occurred to h m that anything save the most casual acquaintance existed between his editor and his daughter.

One day we were riding from Calais to Paris when, after reading a letter from his wife, he said, in answer to my question as to how things were at home: "My wife says that daughter is showing evidences of being interested in some young man,—she is quiet, very thoughtful, and all that. Of course, my wife is wrong," he con-

tinued with perfect self-sufficiency. "Daughter is too young for that sort of thing."

This was a line of talk in which I was, of course, intensely interested, and I determined to follow up the advantage.

"That may be," I said, "but some day that fact will face you. What then?"

"Oh, yes, of course, some day, but not for a long time yet." Then he mused and added: "Well, I hope the fellow will be a decent chap: not one of those that I see standing on the steps of the hotels sucking cigarettes."

As I was smoking a cigarette at that moment, this was not an auspicious beginning.

"What's the matter with an occasional cigarette?" I ventured. "That would put me under your ban."

He laughed. "Well," he said, "not as you smoke a cigarette, but you know the type I mean."

This was encouraging, and I determined to lead him on. I felt guilty, but my interest in the moment was too great.

"What kind of a chap have you in mind for your daughter?" I ventured.

"I want him to be first of all decent. Then I ask that he will be a good business man. He need not have arrived, of course, so long as I

MR. CURTIS'S DAUGHTER AND ONLY CHILD, MRS. EDWARD BOK

can see that he has the qualities for effective work. I intend to have these two things looked into."

"How?" I asked.

"Have his private life looked into by a detective and his business standing by Bradstreet right away," he answered decisively, and the thought seemed to give him infinite satisfaction.

When somewhat later the suitor for his daughter's hand came to him, the young man added that he was perfectly willing to be looked up by a detective and Bradstreet!

He looked at the young man, lit a cigar, smiled wanly, and said: "Yes, I suppose so."

The complete metamorphosis of Mr. Curtis from a man marked for ill health to one of present excellent health is really one of his remarkable achievements.

Mr. Curtis had, of course, the wiry constitution that comes with and out of the air of Maine to build upon. But it was his imagination and the will-power back of the thought which compelled the resolution and carried it out, so that he is to-day a living example that a man can apply the injunction of Christ to his physical being: "Ye must be born anew."

CHAPTER XIV

THE RISE OF "THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL"

WITH the field clear ahead of him, Mr. Curtis launched forth on a publicity campaign with *The Ladies' Home Journal.* He felt instinctively that he had now a periodical publication with a fundamental principle which, with exploitation, would enter a field which was not overcrowded and that could be occupied by the right sort of a magazine. He had, in his wife, a naturally sympathetic editor who stood ready to do all that she could to make the sort of a magazine that the woman with her household problems wanted. Everything seemed propitious for a systematic try-out of the proposition.

He figured out that while he was making the effort, and spending the money to secure single subscriptions, he could just as well get them coming in groups. So he announced that while the nominal subscription price of the magazine was fifty cents a year, where a group of four

women would band together and send in their subscriptions in clubs of four, he would accept all four for one dollar for twelve numbers. His discernment, of course, proved to be sound, for ninety per cent of his subscriptions came in clubs of four, and after six months of effort he found his circulation of twenty-five thousand doubled to fifty thousand copies.

He wanted now to start a moderate advertising campaign with the advertising agency, N. W. Ayer and Son, and was met with the suggestion that the firm would like to experiment with an advertisement to be placed by it in three periodicals, the total cost to be four hundred dollars. Mr. Curtis assented to the idea, the advertisement was placed, and the result was good. The appropriation was now conservatively enlarged, and again the results justified the investment. For according to Mr. Curtis's view, then as now, an advertising appropriation is not an expense, but an investment: it creates an asset in the business in name and good-will, and as such cannot be charged as expense.

In another six months, Mr. Curtis found his circulation again doubled to one hundred thousand copies. He now found his quarters too cramped for his growing business, and as there was no more room in the building where he was

situated, he rented larger quarters at 427 Arch Street, where he could lease three floors.

More advertising now followed through the Ayer firm, and once more another six months found the circulation of the new paper doubled to two hundred thousand copies.

True to his method of giving the public the best he could secure, Mr. Curtis determined to solidify his proposition by obtaining the writings of some of the best-known authors in the domestic field of that day, and then use these names in a large way in his advertisements. Mrs. Curtis was doing all the editing at home, but with her home duties and the care of her little daughter she naturally could not travel to the homes of the authors whose interest her husband wanted to enlist. She had been securing the best material she could by correspondence, but the more famous authors would have to be personally seen and persuaded into the pages of the newcomer in the periodical field.

Mr. Curtis concluded to set out on a quest for authors, and decided first to see Marion Harland, who was then at the zenith of her reputation as a domestic writer. She lived at Springfield, Massachusetts, where her husband had a church parish. She received Mr. Curtis pleasantly, but assured him that she was com-

mitted to other periodicals whose editors kept her busy. The new publisher persuaded her finally, however, to let him have a story she had under her hand. Mr. Curtis accepted it, and promised to pay her ninety dollars for it.

When he arrived home, elated with his success, his wife met his recital with a look of alarm.

"Ninety dollars for how many stories?" she asked.

"One," replied her husband.

"One?" echoed the wife. "Do you want to bankrupt the concern? You cannot afford to pay such prices."

Mr. Curtis had to acknowledge the justice of his wife's view. He had managed to pay back the amount loaned him by his brother-in-law to start *The Tribune and Farmer*, but he was barely able to pay his printing bills and overhead expenses and to meet the Ayer accounts for the advertising he was doing. No one knew better than the wife and mother how little there remained for household expenses, and the husband realized the weight of the argument that there was no money left for "high-priced authors" who demanded ninety dollars for a single story.

"Well," he decided, "we'll have to finance it in some way." And straightway he did. There

was a manufacturer of an egg-beater who was an enthusiastic admirer of Marion Harland's writings, and was always ready to advertise in those periodicals for which she wrote. Mr. Curtis went to him, told him he had secured the manufacturer's favorite domestic expert to write for his magazine, and that he ought to advertise in that periodical. The manufacturer agreed: Mr. Curtis sold him ninety dollars' worth of advertising space,—"and so," he explains, "I financed my first big editorial outlay!"

Having a famous name to advertise, Mr. Curtis did so, and another six months told once more the same story: the circulation again doubled from two hundred thousand to four hundred thousand copies per month.

Flushed with his success, the publisher-editor set out on another quest for authors, and this time he tried to secure such popular writers of the day as Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, Rose Terry Cooke, Robert J. Burdette, Josiah Allen's wife, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and Louisa M. Alcott. But the road was not easy. He was courteously received by the writers, and they politely listened to him. But the fame of *The Ladies' Home Journal* had not reached these writers; all that they wrote was eagerly taken by other editors; Mr. Curtis had "poor pickings." He

acknowledges "it was a hard chase." But he went back to each writer, and persevered.

He heard incidentally that Louisa M. Alcott had a charity in which she was vitally interested. So to Miss Alcott the energetic author-chaser returned, with the proposition that he would pay one hundred dollars for a column article for her charity. This proved too strong a temptation for the woman with a pet charity. She sent Mr. Curtis an article, and he sent her a check for one hundred dollars. Some time later when he saw the article in the magazine he discovered that it exceeded a column in length; it was almost two columns. He wrote Miss Alcott, reminding her that he had promised her one hundred dollars per column: he had just discovered the length of her article and enclosed another check for one hundred dollars to make good his word to her. Miss Alcott was so pleased at this that she told of it to other authors, who, in turn, decided that a publisher so conscientious should be encouraged. Forthwith, his proposals fell on ears not quite so deaf.

All this time, Mr. Curtis had increased his advertising rates to keep pace with his rapidly growing circulation, but even with this income he realized that his growth was too fast, and he decided upon the unusual course of checking his

circulation. He announced that hereafter his club offer of four subscriptions for one dollar would not be continued, and that the subscription price would henceforth be a straight fifty cents a year.

Coincident with this decision, he announced the list of famous authors who had been engaged to write for the magazine, and promised the public a full fifty cents' worth during a year. The public took him at his word, and increased his circulation to seven hundred thousand copies.

Once more Mr. Curtis saw that he had to check his circulation, particularly as he had difficulty in increasing his advertising rates fast enough to keep up with his growth.

He now decided to enlarge his magazine by doubling its size and doubling the subscription price to one dollar per year. No one to whom he spoke of his plan approved of it. The printing establishment where the paper was being printed had ordered some new machinery to keep pace with the fast-growing paper, but when the owner heard of Mr. Curtis's determination he cancelled the order for the additional machinery. "You've got a wonderful business growing fine," he said to Mr. Curtis. "Now you're going to spoil the whole thing. Your public won't follow you at the higher price." And to a friend,

the printer opined: "Curtis's success has gone to his head. Now he's going to blow his whole outfit to pieces."

Mr. Curtis well knew that if he pursued the course he had laid out for his periodical it meant a temporary shrinkage of income until he could convince his public that his magazine was worth the new price, or could induce a new public to come to him. He realized it would require a large expenditure of money for advertising and overhead capital to tide him over his lean period.

He laid his plan before F. Wayland Ayer, of N. W. Ayer and Son, and sought his opinion.

"Good," was the verdict and Mr. Curtis was encouraged. It was the first favorable word his plan had evoked.

"But I shall have to advertise widely," he argued, "and I shall have to get credit for it until I can demonstrate the wisdom of my plan to the public."

"How much credit do you think you will want?" asked Mr. Ayer.

"I hesitated to tell him," Mr. Curtis says in recounting the conversation now, "but I thought I might as well give it to him straight.

"Two hundred thousand dollars," answered the publisher.

"That doesn't scare me," replied the advertising chief. "But," he added, "if you're going to build up your business on such a scale you will need two other essentials: credit at some of the banks and credit from your paper makers. I think I can arrange both for you."

An adequate line of financial credit was arranged by Mr. Ayer at three depositories, and then it was arranged that he and Mr. Curtis take a trip to New England and obtain credit from Crocker, Burbank and Company, of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, who were supplying the white paper for *The Ladies' Home Journal.*

Mr. Curtis had dealt only for a brief period with this firm, and its members knew little or nothing of the man or his plans. A personal visit and favorable impression, therefore, was essential.

The paper firm had been notified of the visit and its purpose, and the visitors were met courteously, but firmly told at the very beginning that their journey was futile, as the firm had decided it could not possibly extend the desired credit of one hundred thousand dollars to the publisher. Mr. Ayer suggested that Mr. Curtis be allowed, at least, to unfold his plan, which might change their point of view. This was done. But the paper manufacturers re-

mained obdurate: they were very sorry; they would be glad to go on as at present, on a cash basis, but they could not consider for one moment the extension of so large a credit based on any plan.

The conference took place in a Boston hotel, and Mr. Ayer suggested that Mr. Curtis retire for a few moments, and leave him for a private talk with the unwilling manufacturers. Mr. Curtis went down-stairs to the hotel lobby, lighted a cigar, and sat there for "what I thought was hours. Then," he says, "I was aked to come up-stairs, and when I entered the room, the demeanor of the men had entirely changed to a most cheerful mood, and I was greeted with: 'Well, Mr. Curtis, you have a good friend in Mr. Ayer. We have decided to give you the credit of one hundred thousand dollars which you want.'

"I certainly was surprised," says Mr. Curtis. "No one ventured to tell me the reason for the change of front, and Mr. Ayer said nothing on the way home. In fact, I never knew what happened, although I often wondered, until only a short while ago in talking with a member of the Ayer firm the incident happened to come up, and I asked what had really happened while I was absent from the room.

"'Well,'" answered the man, "'now that is so long ago there is no reason why I should not tell you. Mr. Ayer guaranteed your notes.'"

But even without that knowledge, Mr. Curtis never failed in his feeling of gratitude to Mr. Ayer. Since that eventful time, Mr. Curtis has spent millions of dollars with the Ayer firm in advertising, while incidentally the Crocker, Burbank firm, which still furnishes the main supply of the Curtis paper, "carries" Mr. Curtis month by month for sums which they never dreamed of on a business totalling millions of dollars each year.

While several banks have from time to time since "carried" Mr. Curtis when he needed it, he was for years principally "carried" by the advertising and paper-making concerns, the banks figuring only in a secondary way, differing in this respect from the business man who, being told that his end was near, asked that only bankers be asked to officiate as pall-bearers at his funeral, explaining that as they had practically carried him all his life he liked to have them finish the job.

Some time previous Mr. Curtis had removed from Philadelphia as a place of residence to Camden, New Jersey, across the Delaware.

He was now building the first house of his

own there, and as it was of goodly size for him and for that day, he had also his building accounts to meet as they fell due.

Mr. Curtis had announced that the increase of the subscription price of *The Ladies' Home Journal* to one dollar per year would take effect on July 1 (of 1889). "I fixed that date," he explains, "because the summer months were always meagre in income, and I figured they might just as well be a little thinner."

And the receipts during that summer certainly were. They fully met every expectation that Mr. Curtis may have had of being "a little thinner" as the summer progressed. They grew so thin, in fact, that at times they became imperceptible. Mr. Curtis would journey over to Philadelphia in the evenings and on Sundays, go to the Post-Office, open the mail-box and see what there was in the mail. There wasn't much, not any more than he could conveniently count. It was evident that his expiring subscribers hesitated to pay double the former price, and he had not yet had time to reach a new clientèle. The critical days met by every enterprise were upon him.

"Many a time," he says now, "during that period I would go home and walk under the trees and try to figure it out."

"Did you ever doubt the wisdom of your course?" I asked.

"Oh, no, not for a moment. My wonder was whether my credit would hold out until the turn came. I knew it would come; I was sure of that, but I couldn't naturally be sure when it would come. That was the problem."

It also came about at this time that the increasing care of a larger house and the attention necessary to a growing daughter, now thirteen years of age, began to weigh upon Mrs. Curtis and make her wonder whether she could continue with her editorship, especially in view of her husband's decision to double the size of the magazine. She pondered over the pros and cons of the situation. Then one day she said to her husband: "I will have to give up this editorial work."

"Why?" asked the husband in undisguised surprise.

"Daughter said to me this morning: 'Mother, whenever I see you, or want you, you have a pen in your hand. You are always busy writing.'"

"That settles it," was Mr. Curtis's instant reply.

Mrs. Curtis felt that her husband was now well enough on his way to do without her direct

assistance, and that she would be equally valuable, if not more so, in the future with her counsel if she were freed from the details of incessant editing. Her daughter had corroborated her own instinct that she was the mother of an observing little girl, and she was glad to turn toward a closer relation with her child. Then began a quest for an editor who could take charge of the enlarged magazine. This was accomplished in the following October (of 1889), when Mrs. Curtis handed over the editorship to Edward W. Bok, who was to hold the position continuously for thirty years.

With the opening autumn, Mr. Curtis began his advertising campaign for which he secured the two hundred thousand dollar credit from N. W. Ayer and Son, only to exceed it and spend three hundred and ten thousand dollars before the winter was over. The banks allowed the publisher full credit: the paper manufacturers kept their contract, and it was a busy time for the next year for Mr. Curtis in meeting his different obligations and his increasing overhead. Slowly, but surely, however, he began to see his vision realized, and before long he had the satisfaction of knowing that his subscription list was on the basis of a dollar per year. When all the fifty-cent subscriptions had run

their course, Mr. Curtis found that instead of having seven hundred thousand subscriptions at fifty cents a year, he now had kept or secured four hundred and eighty-eight thousand subscriptions at one dollar per year: a much better financial basis. He now discontinued his entire premium department: he refused all "cut" rates on his magazine, and from that time determined to stand out for the full value of the magazine giving full value in its contents for the money. He pared down his advertising commissions, and literally put his house in order for a simplified business of value asked for value given.

Early in 1891, he decided to transfer the business into a stock company with a capital stock of five hundred thousand dollars; to hold a controlling interest, and with the amount received from the balance of the stock erect his own printing plant of presses and a new building, of which the business was sorely in need, as it had outgrown its present quarters. So, on June 25, 1891, The Curtis Publishing Company was organized, with Mr. Curtis as President. Shortly afterward the first presses were purchased and erected on properties leased on Appletree Street, just back of Arch Street, and the first Curtis Building, under lease, was erected for the company in 1893, on the site of 421 to 425 Arch Street.

The business had now room to grow, and grow it did. The circulation of the magazine steadily increased until it reached the figure unheard of in those days of one million copies per month. More properties were acquired, additional machinery was bought, and it was not long before every foot of the new publication building was occupied, and additional quarters had to be found outside.

Mr. Curtis now decided that he would find a site and erect a building which would meet all his future needs, and with unerring instinct he selected the square bounded by Walnut, Sixth, Seventh, and Sansom Streets. The building was to face Independence Square and flank on Washington Square, historic city squares which would never be built up and so would afford adequate light and perspective for a large publication business. It took a long time to acquire all the properties and erect a suitable building, for while the plans were in progress of drafting Mr. Curtis had decided to add a second periodical, and the plans were all redrawn and enlarged. But in 1911 the present Curtis Building was finished, and the business was transferred, only to find a few years later that it had once more expanded beyond the capacity of an entire city square, and that enlargements and extensions were once more in

order,—with every cubic foot of space now in use. For as *The Ladies' Home Journal* became more widely known, its circulation began to increase beyond the million mark with greater rapidity than its speed in reaching that figure.

The subsequent growth of *The Ladies' Home Journal* is familiar to the public. It seemed marvellous until the fact of the hard and the incessant work which was put into it was known, and the increased amounts of money which Mr. Curtis was always ready to invest in making the magazine better or in keeping not only abreast of its growth with new machinery, but invariably a little ahead of it, so that the public demand should always be met in full. This was not always possible, but the attempt was consistent and insistent.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to put upon paper, so that it will carry conviction to the reader, an adequate picture of the tensity of such a struggle as Mr. Curtis went through in his establishment of *The Ladies' Home Journal.* His subsequent struggle with *The Saturday Evening Post* was to be severe, but then he would have the profits of *The Journal* to offset the losses on *The Post.* But during the early days of *The Journal* he had no means: he

financed solely on credit. Success, viewed in the retrospect, is dangerous in that one sees only the spectacular moments: the high spots in the battle; the daily strain is lost sight of. It is easy now to say that one month *The Journal* had four hundred thousand circulation, and a few months thereafter it had a circulation of one million copies. It sounds as if success had come overnight, so to speak; as if Mr. Curtis had sown in the morning and reaped in the evening. But in legitimate business, success is never so made. Happily so, for the exhilaration is in the fight: in the feeling not of the length of the step as that the step is in the right direction. The hazards of business were on every side of Mr. Curtis in those days, but he never showed undue anxiety. Filled with the zest and love of the game, confident that his vision was true and the goal attainable, he fought on valiantly and straight to his mark. There were days when it required the finest financial acumen to meet notes falling due at the bank, current bills, and a growing weekly pay-roll.

It is not so simple as some may think to impress a large public through the types and get the conviction into the public mind that it should buy something which it does not need.

For one does not need a magazine: lives are lived without its influence. Food, clothes, coal, a public must have. It is not a bodily want which the publisher satisfies: it is a mental want. And before the want can be proven, the need for the want must be created. Hence, Mr. Curtis's path in those pioneer days was not simple. "That made it so interesting," he says, "because it wasn't easy."

A canvasser once misquoted the circulation of *The Ladies' Home Journal* at the time of its rapid growth, giving it credit for more than it actually had, and when the fact was demonstrated to him, he reflected the marvellous growth of the periodical when he answered: "All right; all the same you can't lie about *The Journal.* It is as the man said about Texas: he could boost it with a clear conscience, even if his figures were sometimes wrong, for, he said, 'What isn't true of it to-day will be to-morrow.' "

Mr. Curtis himself reflected this once when a friend asked him at luncheon: "What is the circulation now of *The Journal?*"

"Now? I really don't know," he answered. "This morning it was two million."

With the retirement of the magazine's second editor in 1919, the editorial direction shortly

thereafter fell into the hands of its present editor, Barton W. Currie, who was for years with the Curtis organization, so that during its forty years of publication it has only had three editors, insuring a consistency of editorial policies and principles which has done much to make for its success.

The present-day *Ladies' Home Journal* has become what one may call an American institution: as the *London Times* recently said: "It is to-day indisputably the representative woman's magazine of the United States." It has reached the astounding circulation figure of two million and a quarter copies per month.

In his first successful publication venture, Mr. Curtis may have perhaps builded better than he knew, but not better than his efforts and his courage called for.

He was destined now to pass through a deep personal sorrow. His sister, father, and mother had all passed away, and he had become accustomed to lean more heavily, as time went by, on his wife and helpmate who had been at his side through all his struggles. But on February 25, 1910, she passed on. His daughter had married and moved to a home of her own, and the man found himself in his home all alone. It was a bitter experience to him after thirty-

five years of married life, and he bent perceptibly under the blow. He felt he had gained much, in a worldly sense, only to lose her who to him was nearly all he valued in life, save his daughter.

CHAPTER XV

CLEANING HOUSE IN ADVERTISEMENTS

I WANT here to lay special emphasis on a point in Mr. Curtis's career which has been misunderstood and therefore misrepresented a number of times. He was the first publisher to realize the principle and sense the wisdom of having the advertisements in his magazine only of the most reliable nature, and to resolve that this should be. In these days this may sound trite. But in those days it was by no means so. The pages of the highest-grade magazines were filled with the most unreliable patent-medicine advertising: the business pages fairly reeked with them. It was acceptable business in the offices of all magazines, high and low. *The Ladies' Home Journal* had its share in its columns, until Mr. Curtis determined that the pages of the magazine should be free of them. He did, and one day issued an order to his advertising department that henceforth no advertisements of proprietary medicines of any kind would be accepted for publica-

tion in *The Ladies' Home Journal.* This step meant more than can now be realized. Quite a considerable part of the advertising revenue of *The Ladies' Home Journal* came from this class of advertisements.

The misrepresentation of Mr. Curtis's action lies in the statement oft-repeated that he decided on this course only when his magazine was well on its way to success. In other words, the notion prevails that Mr. Curtis was content to stand for a principle only when he could afford to do so.

Exactly the opposite is true. Mr. Curtis actually decided on his policy at the most precarious moment in the history of *The Ladies' Home Journal.* I remember distinctly when he issued his order and that the treasurer of the company came to me bewailing Mr. Curtis's action at such a time, and tried to prevail upon me to influence Mr. Curtis to make his action effective on a date six months after. "He could not have chosen a more disastrous time than this," argued the treasurer, "to curtail our income, when we need every penny we can scrape together." I would not bring up the matter to Mr. Curtis, but the treasurer did, with the result that I prophesied when he proposed it. Mr. Curtis never even commented on the suggestion,

but simply looked at his treasurer. The look was enough!

It was only a few days after his order had been issued that I was sitting at his side while he was opening the morning mail. It was on a Friday: the pay-roll had to be made up that day, and the balance in the bank was not sufficient. The banks were full of Mr. Curtis's paper: the limit of credit had been reached. The results in the mail were scanty. He had reached almost the end of the pile of letters, and we knew that the money enclosures were not ample to meet the need at the end of the day. We were conscious, too, that we could expect little from the light noon and afternoon mails.

Mr. Curtis cut open a letter and out dropped a certified check for eighteen thousand dollars,—calling for six full pages in *The Ladies' Home Journal.* It came from a well-known advertising agency: an unusual incident, since the credit of the agency was excellent and the usual procedure would have been simply to order the six pages and make payment at the usual times.

I looked with a rapacious interest at the check, only to see Mr. Curtis instantly put it back into the envelope, say "Oh," and then "Of course, we can't take that," and mark across the envelope "Return."

The check was to cover six full pages of the advertisement of a well-known patent medicine!

There was not a moment's hesitation in Mr. Curtis's action, and he went on to the next letter as if he had done nothing extraordinary. The incident occurring on such a day of all days naturally burnt itself into my memory. So perfectly natural and simple was the action on Mr. Curtis's part that only recently when I spoke of it to him he could not recall it. But I shall never forget the bomb which exploded in the advertising department when the letter reached there with Mr. Curtis's laconic "Return" written on it.

Years afterward I was talking to the advertising agent who had sent this order and check, and asked if he recalled the incident.

"Perfectly well," he answered.

"Why did you adopt the unusual method of sending a certified check with the order?" I asked.

He smiled. "I heard that Curtis was put to it financially, and made up my mind that I might get an advantage for my customer if I made the check large enough. It would be a good test of Curtis, too. And it was—from that point on I knew success was his."

From the patent-medicine field Mr. Curtis

went on with his house cleaning of his advertising columns, and the next to fall under his ban were all advertisements of cosmetics. Now, in a woman's magazine this business is naturally a considerable factor, but no such calculation entered into Mr. Curtis's mind. He didn't believe in rouges and powders for women, and thus could not bring himself to advocate their purchase through the columns of his magazine. And out they went, and with them went another part of the advertising income. Financial advertisements came next, and when I asked Mr. Curtis his policy on this point he answered: "There are some good financial advertisements, of course, but a good many are shaky: they represent all sorts of land and loan and building schemes, and the only way not to take a chance is to eliminate all, good or bad. You can't open the door to the few: then comes up the question of discrimination. There are hundreds of widows who read *The Ladies' Home Journal* and believe in it. They are left a small legacy or an insurance policy, and they are led through us to invest their little in these schemes. We can't afford to take the responsibility."

Then came Mr. Curtis's declaration to his readers that The Curtis Publishing Company would be personally responsible for any loss in-

curred by any reader through any purchase based upon an advertisement in *The Ladies' Home Journal.*

He had cleaned house, wanted his readers to know it, and was prepared to back up his action and promise that he believed every advertisement in his magazine was reliable.

All this is, as I say, familiar enough now to magazine readers when advertisements in the high-grade periodicals stand for what they seem. But that radical change—and it was radical—was brought about by Mr. Curtis, who blazed the way and has lived to see his stand justified on every hand by the tremendous influence which he has had in raising the standard of magazine advertising more than any single man in the business. And he did this, I repeat, not in the flush of prosperity, but when, from a financial standpoint, he could least afford to do it.

Another incident which I personally experienced with him shows that a principle with him has no financial aspect.

When I became editor of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, he had in connection with it a flourishing premium department through which he offered watches, rain-coats, dinner-sets, silver sets, sewing-machines, and I don't know what-not in exchange for subscriptions. Such a department

was a common adjunct to the popular magazine of that day, and I soon discovered that it was a profitable adjunct not alone in securing subscriptions, but in the actual profit involved.

But the idea, as exemplified in six to a dozen pages in each issue of the magazine, seemed to me at variance with Mr. Curtis's instructions to me to lift the standard of his periodical, and I told him so.

"I know it," he agreed. "I don't like it, but there it is."

"Would you consider something else of a higher order in its place which would bring equal results?" I asked.

"I certainly would," was his instant answer. "There's nothing in the business I would rather get rid of than this premium department."

Shortly thereafter I submitted a plan to him which had never been tried: of offering free educations at musical conservatories and educational institutions in return for subscriptions. I argued for its higher standard and that it had a tremendously helpful side in making free educations possible to those who could not afford them.

"I should say so," he answered emphatically. "The very thing. Work it out at once. I'll close the premium department out right away."

The premium department was then netting him annually one hundred thousand subscriptions and an additional profit of thirty thousand dollars—a very large and needed part of his income. The plan for free education was at the best to be tested before deciding whether it could be made successful, and I advocated retaining the premium department until the efficiency of the free-education plan had been demonstrated.

"No," he said, "you can't drive two horses like that. I'll stop the premium department and that will give you a free track for your free educations in the magazine."

And forthwith the premium department was discontinued before even the free-education plan had been started. His faith in the plan was absolute and sufficient for him, and to retain a department in which he did not believe and yet prosper on it was not to his taste, and did not square with his principles.

I have never known Mr. Curtis to put profit before principle, and no man is more insensible to any calculation of the most favorable time to stand for a principle.

CHAPTER XVI

THE METHODS BY WHICH HE WORKS

MR. CURTIS'S habits of work are peculiarly his own. They express the man with startling clearness. They are as simple and direct as are his mental processes.

His impatience of detail is the chief characteristic in his work. "Details are necessary, of course," he says, "but not for me. I plan and direct; I employ people to work out details," and he rarely concerns himself with them. Hand him a financial statement, and his eye immediately and instinctively goes to the bottom of the column. "What is the result?" he always asks. "I am only interested in results." When a result is unfavorable to his mind, he will lay the statement aside to take up at a later time. Then he will analyze it, and with an instinct as true as it is quick, his mind finds and fixes the salient point of failure. He can master detail if he chooses, but he does not choose, when he can possibly avoid it. Give him a paper that seems lengthy to him—and almost all papers have that look to him unless only one side of one sheet is

covered—he will look at it, lay it down, or hand it back with the question: "What is the gist of this?" He is always after the main point. Absolutely unargumentative in his nature, he is impatient of the argument of others. His business conferences are usually brief. He makes them so. This trait is so well understood by those associated with him that they are trained to bring before him only the essential points of a problem. His solution is almost always immediate, equally brief and to the point. Then his manner is one of instant dismissal, and he is ready for the next caller or question.

The result is he never seems hurried. He works invariably with a clean desk before him, reading or leisurely smoking as if he had nothing on his mind or for his hands to do. But he is instantly ready for any question to be brought up to him.

He spends very little time, comparatively speaking, in his office. The result is that he is a difficult man to catch, and avoids scores of unnecessary appointments and time-consuming visitors. When at home he is usually in some office or department of his Curtis or *Ledger* plant. He is, however, constantly on the go, now in this city, then in that city, seeing this new building or plant, meeting this or that man. Peculiarly

sensitive to impressions, he mixes a great deal with men, and is always quietly appraising and cataloguing men for some opening which may occur in his organizations. He is a strong believer in getting about and seeing what is going on in other cities and hearing what other men are saying. He is constantly adjuring his executives to "get away from your desks, and knock against people. Hear what the other fellow is saying."

As nimble as a young man, he gets around very fast, and during the course of a year travels considerably and covers a deal of territory. He tarries very briefly in an office: his calls are always of the shortest duration. "I learned long ago," he says, "not to give the other fellow a chance to rise first. I am always up and out before he thinks of it." In this way, he is a great conserver of time. He sees and learns and absorbs as much in fifteen minutes as another man does in an hour. His mind is ever on the alert and photographic in its registry of impressions.

His bestowal of confidence upon his executives is unquestionably one of the secrets of his later success. He is slow to criticise, where the need arises, and prefers to let the man find out his own mistakes. "Better for him," he says laconically. If he is slow to criticise, he is like-

wise slow to praise. This hesitancy is not due to a lack of appreciation: he is simply not given to it. His silence is his commendation, and an executive must accept this negative approbation of his work. When he criticises, it is rarely direct: it is almost invariably an expression of his view, and he intends that the person interested shall apply it to the point involved.

His most striking single qualification, I should say, is his capacity to see farther and more clearly than other men. His vision is generally as clear as his methods are simple in realizing his vision. Once he fixes his course, he allows no discouragement to influence him.

His patience with others, their faults or shortcomings, is proverbial. As one of his trusted lieutenants said of him, in discussing a man who had failed Mr. Curtis almost to the Biblical limit of seventy times seven: "I never saw a man who can so complacently and so consistently sit on a lid, and patiently stay there." But when his patience runs out, when he is absolutely certain of his ground, he jumps with the agility of a cat, and once through with a man he is completely through with him. There is never any doubt where Mr. Curtis stands on a question, or in his relation to another man.

Few men live more within themselves than

Mr. Curtis. So completely is this true of him that it may be said of him he has not a single confidant. He discloses his plans to no one, unless asked. Then he will discuss them frankly. But left to himself, no one ever knows what is going on in his mind until he has actually embarked on the plan itself. He never asks advice in the same way as other men do. He reads, listens, and absorbs, and what he can use he adds to the plan in his mind. It is not that he thinks advice is valueless: his difficulty in reaching expression seems to make him incapable of explaining an idea, even one which may have been in his mind for months. It is clear to him, but he has difficulty in making it clear to others.

His calmness amid the most charged surroundings is marvellous. Of course, as I have tried to make clear in a previous chapter, this placidity has become true of him only in his later twenty years. Every one around him may lose their heads. Mr. Curtis never does. He sits silent and quiet, the picture of placidity. He lets everybody else do the talking. Then only when his turn comes, or is asked, or when every one is finished, will he speak, and even at such times in only the fewest words. He has been known to attend three successive board

meetings of a bank of which he is a director without uttering a word. "Nothing to talk about," he explained. "Why use up time?" Naturally, when he does speak, he is carefully listened to. But it is always to the point, with never a word wasted. It is a curious mental habit, too, that he never prefixes an opinion with "I think" or "My opinion is": the opinion is given direct. "If I say a thing, it stands to reason it is my opinion. Why say what is obvious?" was his comment once on this trait.

Once having expressed his opinion, he never argues or combats the opinions of others. If a matter is decided against his own opinion, he accepts it. No man I have ever known is so entirely free of the combative or argumentative spirit. He absolutely lives the rule of "Live and let live."

His ears are always on the alert. One day he was riding on a very old elevator in a building which he owns when a passenger criticised it and said: "Old man Curtis ought to fix this thing. There'll be a big accident here some day." When the passenger got out, Mr. Curtis got out, too, and said: "I am 'old man Curtis.' How about this elevator?" The man gasped with astonishment, but on being assured that Mr. Curtis was out for information, gave him his

views. The next day the elevator was "closed for repairs."

When his great Curtis Building was being erected he came down after hours one evening, and attempted to duck under the guard rails and see how the interior work was progressing. The watchman, not knowing who he was, barred his way.

"No one is allowed in there," he said.

Mr. Curtis looked at the man, and seeing he did not recognize him, merely said: "All right," and went home, without disclosing his identity!

Despite all his success, and the service at his call, Mr. Curtis has never lost the habit of doing things for himself. He will rarely ring his bell for a girl employee to come to him; invariably; he goes to her. He rarely summons one of his executives: he goes to his office. Rather than ring for an elevator, and wait for it, he walks up and down the four flights of stairs to his office. When he plays golf, it never occurs to him to engage a caddy: he carries his own bag of clubs. It is a constant comment of his employees in the Curtis Building that "Mr. Curtis walks in and out here as if he is nobody." He stepped into one of his elevators one evening and the boy said: "I'll take you right down, Mr. Curtis, and

get these other people later." Each floor had its load of employees waiting to go home.

"Why?" asked Mr. Curtis in complete surprise.

One of the reasons why men like to work for and with Mr. Curtis is his willingness to give a man the fullest chance for his greatest development. "The bigger he becomes," he smilingly says, "the better for the business." But his point of view in this respect is not as mercenary as he would have people believe. He actually creates conditions to develop his men, and then glories in the fact that they do develop. He is constantly developing himself, and admires the same development in others. All the time he keeps in the background as if he were not there. He dislikes the limelight of publicity and rigorously shuns it. Any attempt to push him into it invariably ends in failure. He is entirely free of the domineering spirit. He wants his organizations to dominate their field, but personally he has not a trace of domination in his nature. On the contrary, he is scarcely ever in evidence. But he is always ready to push one of his young men forward. He first tests. Then he trusts. And when he does trust it is absolute and complete.

He loves business, big business, and the bigger

it is the better he likes it. You cannot frighten him with the bigness of a proposition: the larger its proportions the more he is interested. "That's it," he will say to some sizable idea or large expenditure which would make the average man blanch, "that has some size to it." But the proposition must be sound: upon the slightest flaw in it his mind leaps in a moment. He is an uncomfortable man to whom to submit a dubious proposition. It is rarely done. Somehow he doesn't attract that kind.

In the early days of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, there used to come to Mr. Curtis from a canvasser in Maine a comparatively large number of subscriptions. The canvasser, who was a woman, was peculiar in that she never would address her communications to the magazine, but always to Mr. Curtis, and usually a personal note accompanied the subscriptions.

A few years ago Mr. Curtis thought of this faithful canvasser of long ago and, after learning she still was living, journeyed from his country place in Maine to see her.

When he introduced himself she gasped in astonishment. "Well," she said, "I surely am surprised. I always thought of you as looking like Abraham Lincoln. If, when I was canvassing, I had met you and found what a little fellow

you are, I don't believe I'd have kept up the work."

And yet Mr. Curtis is literally not a "little fellow." He is only a trifle below medium height,—five feet eight inches.

There is a tremendous amount of quiet force in "little fellows" sometimes, and the presence of this quality you feel at once in Mr. Curtis. He is the kind of a man who would have succeeded in anything he had undertaken. Chance simply made him a publisher. Had he realized his boyish ambition of being a merchant, he would unquestionably have been a second A. T. Stewart or Marshall Field. Opportunity of any sort would have found Mr. Curtis ready for the occasion.

His rules in his business are very simple.

To his editors he says: "Give the public the best. It knows. The cost is secondary."

To his circulation managers he says: "Keep the magazine before the public, and make it easy for the public to get it."

To his advertising men he says: "We know we give advertisers their money's worth, but it is up to you to prove it to them."

When one of his executives comes to him to solve a problem which he believes the executive should solve for himself he is quick to say,

"That's your job, not mine." In this way he develops his men. He refuses to allow them to borrow his mind. "You have a mind of your own," he says. "Use it."

There are two kinds of men in Mr. Curtis's estimation who never amount to anything, and for these he has no use: the one kind that cannot do as they are told, and the other kind who can do nothing else.

He rarely makes a suggestion to his magazine editors. To his newspaper editors he sends a constant flow of suggestions. Whenever he reads anything that strikes him as unusually good, he whips out his pocket scissors, clips it, sticks it in an envelope and sends it on to one of his newspaper editors. In this way he reveals to them his mental processes and what he is after in his newspaper.

One explanation of his business energy, the clarity of his vision, his sprightliness, his tolerance and his breadth of interest in men and measures is contained in the fact that he never has become self-centred, and never has departed from a sane, well-balanced course by overdoing anything.

When the name of Benjamin Franklin, through *The Saturday Evening Post*, became linked with The Curtis Publishing Company, an

opportunity was offered to the company to purchase a valuable collection of Franklin imprints. To this original collection, others were added until there was assembled what was pronounced one of the most complete collections of its kind in existence. The imprints were placed on exhibition in a room in the Curtis Building, until the pressure for space became so great that it was deemed necessary to remove the collection and place it in storage. It seemed a waste of a wonderful collection thus to remove it from public accessibility, and it was decided it would be better to dispose of it. It had cost the company about forty thousand dollars.

Mr. Curtis's directness of mind was here well illustrated. He listened to a discussion of the sale of the collection until it was over, and then said: "Why sell it? Why not give it to the institution founded by Franklin, the University of Pennsylvania?"

The simple thought had occurred to no one. The collection was offered to the university, gratefully accepted, and is to-day one of its valued possessions.

"Rather primitive, isn't it?" asked Mr. Curtis once when he was induced to visit The Curtis Country Club which the employees had

started in a dilapidated barn on an uninviting piece of land.

"Yes," was the answer. "But the boys can't afford anything better."

"The company can," was the laconic answer. And the company did. To-day it supports, when there is a deficit, a Curtis Country Club for its employees in the suburbs of Philadelphia. There is a club-house which can entertain two thousand persons at one time, set in a wonderful park of one hundred and fifty-four acres filled with streams and woodland. There is a huge outdoor swimming-pool facing the club-house; two baseball diamonds; six tennis-courts; a quarter-mile running track; a two-hundred-and-twenty-yard straightaway track; a football oval; a shooting range and gun club; a large acreage for individual vegetable gardening, and over one hundred bungalows which the company leases to the families of its employees for an entire summer for sixty-five dollars. These bungalows are supplied with running water, gas, and kitchen range. The restaurant prices are reduced to the minimum.

One of Mr. Curtis's cardinal rules in business which he laid down for himself early in life, and from which he has never departed, is a determination not to invest his money in any

enterprise in which he is not directly interested. "Too many men have slipped up there," he says. "They make money in a business they understand, and then invest it in some business which they do not understand. A shoemaker should stick to his last." And no matter how attractive may be the offer, how "sure" the investment, Mr. Curtis will never even consider it. When he reaches the point of surplus in an enterprise, and where others might take it out and invest it in other lines, Mr. Curtis puts it back into one of his periodicals and strengthens or expands it.

With gambling, stock speculation, betting, he has not a moment's patience. They never are allowed to come within his ken.

Mr. Curtis has no set rules which have guided his life; no "motto." He has a few aphorisms which aptly describe him and his methods. "Yesterday ended last night" is one of his favorites, meaning that he never looks back: his mind is always on the present and in the future. "Capitalize your errors" is another. "There is no fun in doing things that are easy" is another, and then he adds: "The real sport is in doing the things that are hard. That is a game worth playing," and then his eyes sparkle and snap.

CHAPTER XVII

THE STORY OF "A SINGED CAT"

DURING all his busy days establishing *The Ladies' Home Journal*, Mr. Curtis never lost sight of his pet idea to create a paper for men. That idea had been firmly implanted in his mind with the reading of Richard B. Kimball's business stories in his boyhood. The chief interest in a man's life, he argued, was the fight for a livelihood; in other words, business. It naturally followed in his mind that men would read about what vitally interested them, provided they were given a true reflection of their problems. He read business story after business story only to be disgusted with their inaccuracy: their false reflection of business methods. He met with the same inaccurate representation of the business world in the plays he saw. All this the more strongly convinced him that there was a field, wide open and waiting, for the man who would put into the hands of business men business stories and business articles which they would recognize as being written by men who knew the machinery of business affairs.

He would explain his idea to men, and, almost unanimously, they would disagree with him. "Men don't want to read about business," they argued. "When their business day is over they want to read about something else."

"But the romance in business!" Mr. Curtis argued.

"There is none," he would be told. But he knew better. Had not his own life demonstrated the marvellous adventurous and romantic elements in business?

So he clung tenaciously to his idea. No argument discouraged him. "Some day," he thought to himself, "I will show them the thrill and romance there is in business rightly written about."

Patiently he bided his time.

Why or how he came to fix upon *The Saturday Evening Post* as his medium through which he was to realize his pet dream, he does not remember, except, as he says, the paper had always attracted him as he met it each week in his exchanges as a legacy left to Philadelphia by Benjamin Franklin. It was Franklin who, in 1728, founded the paper under the title of *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. He edited and published it for a number of years, and then sold it to his grandson. Meanwhile six other papers

of all sorts had been born in Philadelphia, all having as part of their title the word *Gazette*. So in 1821, to avoid a constant confusion of names, the name was changed to *The Saturday Evening Post*. The spirit of enterprise of that day must have been put into the venture, for in 1839 it had a circulation of thirty-five thousand copies, the largest circulation of that day of any weekly in the United States. The most famous statesmen and writers of the time were among its contributors, and it ranked as the most important publication of the time.

The weekly passed into various ownerships in Philadelphia, then its proprietorship passed to a resident of Brooklyn, New York, although the place of publication remained in Philadelphia, and finally it was purchased by Albert Smyth, of Philadelphia, whose property it was when Mr. Curtis came to the Quaker city.

The paper had never missed an issue since the evacuation of Philadelphia in the War of the Revolution, and its ownership was a matter of pride with Smyth. He and Mr. Curtis would often talk about the history and tradition of the paper, and it was from these chats that Mr. Curtis believes his interest in the weekly began and grew. From curiosity rather than from design, Mr. Curtis had the history of the

paper looked up, and it was not long before Smyth acknowledged that his friend knew more about it than he knew himself.

Its circulation was slowly dwindling. No one gave it any special attention. A reporter on the *Philadelphia Times*, in his odd moments, was supposed to be its editor at the princely salary of ten dollars per week, and he "scissored" its contents or purchased material published years before.

Mr. Curtis could not help feeling regret that a paper with such traditions was allowed to run down, and he began finally to speculate what Smyth intended doing with it, if anything; or, if he would sell it, what it was worth. It was only a shell, but there was the tradition back of it. After all, Benjamin Franklin had founded it, and that was an asset which could be built upon.

Smyth now transferred what little interest he ever had in *The Saturday Evening Post* to a gas project in Chicago, and went there, leaving the paper in charge of a friend named Brady to look after until he returned. He was to make "his pile" in Chicago, and then come back to Philadelphia and revivify the weekly.

One day in 1897 Brady walked into Mr. Curtis's office, and with him was a lawyer.

"Smyth has passed away," Brady announced. "His only heir is a sister. She will not put up any money to get out this week's issue. You are the only man I can turn to for money."

Then Mr. Curtis told them something they had not known. No copyright covered the name *The Saturday Evening Post.* The owners had neglected to register it. If an issue was missed, if the heir did not furnish the money to get it out, any one could take up the name.

The lawyer confirmed this.

Mr. Curtis said he would not do anything like that.

"You see you really haven't anything to sell!" he remarked. "However, I'll give you one thousand dollars for the paper, type and all."

After some discussion, he paid one hundred dollars down, the other nine hundred dollars to be paid when he got clear title.

One of the young men in the Curtis establishment was sent down with a wagon to the printing-office to bring up the stock of battered type, and as soon as it arrived, that week's issue was thrown together and the paper put out, so as to save the right to the title by continuous publication.

The imprint of The Curtis Publishing Com-

pany was placed on this number. About two thousand names were found to represent the subscription list, and so accustomed were these readers to the reprinted material which had been offered them that when Mr. Curtis substituted original matter, they promptly allowed their subscriptions to lapse! So, he had almost a clean slate to begin with: no subscribers and no advertisers. He had paid one thousand dollars for a title and the name of Benjamin Franklin.

Mr. Curtis had now been married to Mrs. Kate Stanwood Pillsbury, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a second cousin. This second marriage had a remarkable effect in restoring his interest in his business and in giving him that companionship in his home to which he was so long accustomed. It is a coincidence that on one occasion the first Mrs. Curtis said to her husband: "If I pass away before you do, I hope you will marry your cousin Kate." This wish had come true, and, with new hope and fresh spirits, Mr. Curtis was mentally prepared for the battle that was before him with *The Saturday Evening Post.*

From the day it was announced that Mr. Curtis had bought Benjamin Franklin's paper, and was to transform it into a weekly for busi-

From a photograph copyright by Bachrach

MRS. CURTIS

(Kate Stamwood Pillsbury)

ness men, lamentations were heard on every side. One after another of his friends deplored his purchase and his plan. Inside of his own establishment, "the singed cat," as it was called, received anything but a warm welcome. *The Ladies' Home Journal* was steadily mounting in its accumulation of profits, and why should these hard-earned profits be eaten up by this weekly which, according to unanimous opinion, was destined to be a dire failure?

The "singed cat" was only fit for the process of chloroforming!

Mr. Curtis was not unaware of the opposition to his new venture both within and without his establishment, but he kept his own counsel, and went on a quest for an editor. That was the first thing. Meanwhile, one of the editors on *The Ladies' Home Journal* staff was delegated to look after the editorial fortunes of the weekly until a regular editor could be found.

Mr. Curtis had some time before watched the editorship of Arthur Sherburne Hardy on *The Cosmopolitan Magazine*, and had made a mental note of his capacity in case he should at any time need an editor. The editor-novelist had made a readable magazine of *The Cosmopolitan*, and had built up his circulation. Mr. Curtis now recalled this impression which he had registered

and looked up Hardy, who, he found, had gone into the diplomatic service and was United States minister to Persia.

Nothing daunted, Mr. Curtis got into communication with the minister, told him of his purchase and his plans, and asked if Hardy was to be anywhere in the near future where he would be more accessible and they could have a talk. The minister replied that he planned to be in Paris shortly, and could Mr. Curtis meet him there? Mr. Curtis said he would, and prepared to sail.

Meanwhile, a mutual friend spoke to Mr. Curtis about a young man in Boston whom he believed had editorial possibilities within him. His name was George Horace Lorimer, the son of the Reverend George C. Lorimer, who preached in Tremont Temple, in Boston, for some years. Mr. Curtis was going to Boston on other business, promised to look the young man over and wrote to him asking him to come and see him at the Hotel Touraine.

When Mr. Curtis met Lorimer the young man told him he had had business experience with the Armours in Chicago, but had left there, although at twenty-two he was receiving the unusual salary of five thousand dollars per year, because he wanted to go into journalism. The

pork merchant had demurred at the young man's "rainbow aspirations," but young Lorimer persisted, went to Colby University, in Maine, where he took a two years' course in the study of general literature, and then became a reporter for another two years on the *Boston Post*, which he had then recently left to devote himself to free-lance literary work. He was, therefore, in a receptive mood to listen to a proposition from Mr. Curtis, who, favorably impressed by him, offered him a position "as a young man on the staff of *The Post* to do anything he could," at a thousand dollars per year. Never for a moment did Mr. Curtis dream that he had found his editor.

Lorimer went to Philadelphia, took hold of what he could find to do on *The Post* staff, and showed such clear-headed common sense in his suggestions in the three weeks in which he had to show his work before Mr. Curtis sailed to Europe to meet Minister Hardy in Paris that Mr. Curtis began to wonder whether Lorimer wasn't an editor. The thought grew upon him, and when he sailed he put Lorimer in full editorial charge of the paper until he could determine whether he could make arrangements with Hardy. "But by the time I sailed," said Mr. Curtis, "I didn't much care whether I got

Hardy or not. I was convinced by this time that Lorimer had all the makings of an editor in him."

It turned out that Mr. Curtis and Minister Hardy were not to meet as arranged. The State Department, at Washington, had ordered the Persian minister's transfer to Athens as minister to Greece. Mr. Curtis was perfectly satisfied. He felt he had the man in Lorimer: at all events, he had given Lorimer his chance to see what he could do, and Mr. Curtis determined to wait until his return to Philadelphia to see what the young man had done.

He found even his brightest expectations not only realized, but exceeded. Lorimer had shown exceedingly high editorial acumen. *The Post* was beginning to get and print the material which Mr. Curtis wanted to see in it, and he told Lorimer he could consider himself as editor.

Mr. Curtis now got back of his editor and his pet project. He did not have to secure financial credit for *The Saturday Evening Post*, as he had for *The Ladies' Home Journal*, because the latter publication was netting a handsome profit, and on this *The Post* could be carried.

But it was a hard and thorny path. No one believed in the outcome of the venture except Mr. Curtis and his editor. Business men shook

their heads, advertising men predicted absolute failure: the organ of the publishing trade, *Printers' Ink*, came out editorially and bewailed the fact that Mr. Curtis had "established a wonderful property in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, and now he was blowing in all the profits on an impossible venture." Journalists assured Mr. Curtis that the day of the weekly was long ago past; that the mental attitude of the public was against it; that he was "bucking the current of public opinion." The New York representative of the paper manufacturers assured him he would have to give *The Post* up or it would break his own back and that of the entire establishment.

Mr. Curtis listened and regretted that nowhere could he get support for his idea, which he felt so convinced was sound.

"Did you ever doubt, yourself?" a friend asked him.

"Not for a single moment: I knew exactly what I was trying to do, or I thought I did," he answered.

"Were you not discouraged by the solid wall of opposition?"

"Not discouraged. The constant reiteration of 'It can't be done' acted like a red rag to a bull. It made me all the more determined. The opposition stiffened my back-bone. I came

back to the spirit of my boyhood days, and said to myself 'I'll show them who is right,' because I knew all the time that I was thinking right. It was simply that I couldn't get anybody to see it as I saw it, or believe in it."

The worst of it was that the public did not see it. A quarter of a million of dollars was spent in advertising the periodical, with little result. "All right," said Mr. Curtis, "I'll send another quarter of a million after it to bring it back."

Time came when the books showed a loss of eight hundred thousand dollars. Mr. Curtis's perturbed treasurer had gone to great pains to prepare these figures, and showed them to him, hoping that the large total would halt any further expenditure.

"Eight hundred thousand dollars' loss thus far, isn't it?" asked Mr. Curtis, looking at the bottom of the statement.

"That's the tremendous figure," impressively said the treasurer.

"Well," answered Mr. Curtis, "that gives us a margin of two hundred thousand more to make a round million."

The treasurer was depressed; in fact, he was almost broken-hearted when on the following day Mr. Curtis began to put out copy for a

two-hundred-thousand-dollar advertising campaign. "That'll bring it up to the million," he joyfully announced. "Then we'll know where we are at!"

Meanwhile, Lorimer had been working days and evenings helping Mr. Curtis to realize his ambition of the kind of paper he wanted, and was beginning to make so strong a paper that men began to take notice of it and wonder whether there wasn't something in the "wild idea" after all. Advertisers were chary, but when the circulation reached five hundred thousand copies they thought they would "try it for an issue or two."

With the public attitude changing, Mr. Curtis knew, of course, that he was winning. But he wanted to make it a fact. So to the utter despair of his treasurer, he spent another quarter of a million of dollars on the paper. Fortunately, the profits of *The Ladies' Home Journal* made this possible.

The ledger now showed a loss of a million and a quarter dollars on the weekly. When would the turning-point be reached? It couldn't be far off, if it was ever to come! Mr. Curtis knew it was in sight, but he wasn't quite prepared for what did come.

He had now "fertilized the soil" for five

years, and the harvest must soon follow, he argued.

And then public opinion changed as overnight. Support came with such a rush that the presses could scarcely keep up with the demand for the paper. The efforts of publisher and editor were to bear fruit. The circulation leaped, and it was not long before the announcement "With a circulation of one million copies" was blazoned forth from a cover on *The Post.*

The first round of the fight had been won! Now agreed publisher and editor to solidify the first million with the second and confuse records and doubters. A succession of the livest editorial features; authoritative business articles; business stories reflective of actual business conditions followed in rapid succession. It began now to be a desire to write for *The Post.* Unknown authors began to have their first efforts published and their reputations made. It was not long before *The Post* began to have the first call on all material within its field. Its contents, week by week, were kept fresh and reflective of the moment. The circulation fairly bowled along. The advertising rates could scarcely be increased rapidly enough to keep pace with the circulation. And in an incredibly brief space of time the two million

mark was not only reached, but as quickly passed.

From this point, *The Saturday Evening Post* has gone on until now it is within a few thousand of the two-and-a-half-million circulation mark, apparently headed straight for its third million.

Like its sister, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, it has become an institution in the life of the United States, regarded by all as the dominant factor in its field.

And this is the "singed cat" which the best business minds tried their best to kill in the unsuccessful attempt to discourage Cyrus H. K. Curtis!

CHAPTER XVIII

HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS EDITORS

"JUST what do you do in your business if you don't edit your magazines?" asked a woman of Mr. Curtis one day.

A twinkle came into his eyes as he answered "I edit the editors."

A truth is often spoken in jest, but here is an instance of a signal untruth in jest. For the outstanding characteristic of Mr. Curtis's relations with his editors is that he lets them severely alone, once he gives them his confidence. One of the strong points about Mr. Curtis is his ability to pick a man for a job. He does not have to wait for a man to make good: he knows he has the right man when he picks him. He has an uncanny sense in this respect. I do not mean that he has a batting average of one hundred per cent; no man can have who has selected so large a number of executives. I would place him in the same percentage column, however, as Sir James M. Barrie placed himself in the category of playwrights when a friend asked him: "Are all your plays successful?"

"No, my dear chap," answered Barrie, his eyes twinkling. "Not all. It's this way: some Peter out and some Pan out."

I have seen Mr. Curtis pick some losers, but invariably I have found these losers to be stop-gaps in positions that had to be filled, and after a while the right man would appear. But when that right man does appear, then Mr. Curtis does his part, and I know of no man in the publishing business, and few there are in any business, who has the faculty developed to the same extent of stepping aside and letting the man function on his own responsibility without the slightest suggestion, interference, or dictation. "Make good or hang yourself," is his motto with his men, and every resource of moral and financial support is put back of the man. "Give him what he wants," he will say. "A man can't work unless he has the tools."

I was one of his editors for thirty years, and not once in all that time was I made to feel that his authority was greater than mine. Not a single time did he try to influence my editorial judgment. "I don't know," he would say. "Why should I?" And that ended it. No one was ever allowed to reach him over my head. An appeal to him to correct his editor fell upon deaf ears.

When it seemed right to me to point out to the women's clubs of America the superficiality of their intellectual work, and counsel greater attention to civics and literary programmes that sent their roots deeper into an intelligent soil, there was a bitter cry of resentment, born of misunderstanding of the spirit of the suggestion. Women's clubs, on every hand, passed resolutions condemning the magazine and its editor, and petitions were circulated, signed by hundreds and in some cases thousands of club women, calling upon Mr. Curtis to remove me from the editorial conduct of the magazine.

"What is all this about?" he asked me one day, as he brought in one of the petitions.

I told him briefly.

"What has it to do with me? Why do they send me these long documents?"

"They want you to discharge me," I answered.

"Oh," he commented, and after that he would come in and toss these bulky petitions on my desk unopened. "More of the same thing, I suppose," would be his comment. I would try to get him to read them, but to no purpose. "Haven't time," he would say, as he looked at his watch.

When I was convinced that the question of

sex knowledge was one to be taken up by *The Ladies' Home Journal*, I went to him and explained the whole situation. I told him I had read along the lines of the subject for over a year, and was convinced it was for our magazine to take it up. "But," I warned him, "it will be like a bolt from the blue to have *The Ladies' Home Journal*, of all magazines, take it up. It will mean a storm of dissent, a three to five years' fight, a loss of advertising and a loss of at least one hundred thousand circulation."

"Then why do you want to do it?" he asked.

"Because I feel it is our duty, as I see it," I answered.

"You say you have gone all over and into the matter?" was his next question.

I told him I had, carefully and fully.

"And you feel you're right?" he asked.

I said I was convinced.

"That's the only point for you to settle. If you're right, then why not go ahead?"

I told him I wanted him to realize the probable loss in circulation.

"Nothing to do with it at all," was his crisp comment.

And from that moment for the next two years no man in a similar position was put under more severe pressure than was Mr. Curtis to dissuade

his editor from the path he had chosen to go. Advertisers, subscribers, friends argued and persuaded. To all his answer was the same: "I know nothing about it. Go and talk to Mr. Bok about it. He is the editor." His closest friends began either to tear out what they deemed the offending pages in the magazine before they would put it on the family table, or to refuse absolutely to allow the magazine to come into their homes. And they were all very careful to tell Mr. Curtis. But he never wavered: never a word came from him. Finally, I opened up the subject, and told him I knew the pressure that was being brought to bear upon him.

"The storm is all you said it would be," was his only comment.

"I'll desist if you say so," I ventured.

"Why, no," he answered, looking at me with some surprise, "unless you have come to believe you are wrong."

I assured him I felt more certain of my ground than ever, and that my plan was to treat the subject even more frankly in the magazine than I had thus far.

"More letters," he sighed. "Well, you'll have to answer them," and from that day he would bring them to my desk and put down pile after

pile without a word of comment. He saw each day the circulation figures drop: advertisers threatened; his advertising manager began to question; but never did I hear one word from him. His support was steady and true. "I don't know a thing about it," was always his final word to every word. "Mr. Bok feels he is right, and that's all there is to it. He is the editor."

How many a publisher, proprietor of a valuable property, would take and then hold a position in the face of such an outcry? And it was universal and national, mind you: scarcely a dissenting voice for nearly two years! The results have proven the wisdom of the movement, but Mr. Curtis took the result on faith. He believed in his editor. That was enough for him, and never for a single moment did he waver in his support.

"The editor is the pivot," is his motto with his publications. "Get the right editor and you'll have the right magazine," he says. "Then it's only a selling proposition."

Nor because of my closeness to him as a member of his family was his treatment of me different from that of his other editors. George Horace Lorimer, editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*, can testify to exactly the same experience.

Mr. Curtis believed in Lorimer from the day he placed him in editorial charge of his weekly, gave him his fullest confidence, and then let him alone save for his wonderful support. Granting, of course, the ability present, is it any wonder that Mr. Curtis's editors succeed with their periodicals?

He is also a great believer that an editor must have business judgment. His editors are not of the literary cult, and he encourages the exercise of their business sense. All the advertisements of the Curtis periodicals are written by the editors. "Who knows better than they," argues Mr. Curtis, "what's in the stuff they publish?" The result is that Lorimer is one of the best advertisement writers in the country. It is this rule of Mr. Curtis's which makes the advertisements of his magazines so individual: they are full of the same personality that is in the magazines. The reader attracted by an advertisement finds precisely the same note in the magazine, and hence becomes a satisfied customer. He is attracted and held by the same man.

When the four-color printing-press was perfected and I felt convinced that I could use it to advantage for editorial purposes, I prepared a statement as the result of frequent consultations with the mechanical superintendent and busi-

ness manager, looking to the purchase of a battery of presses. It was an important move in those days of little or no adequate colored printing in the magazines, and this installation was purely for editorial purposes: the printing of advertisements in color was then unknown and unthought of, and I did not have it in mind. The initial cost was eight hundred thousand dollars, and I placed the statement in Mr. Curtis's hands. Nothing appalls Mr. Curtis so much as a lengthy document, and this was five or six legal-cap pages.

"What's this about?" he asked, as he fingered the leaves. "What's the gist of it?"

I told him briefly, and the cost.

"That's a sizable proposition," was his comment. "Well, you say you have gone into the matter carefully?"

I assured him.

"Well, why don't you order the presses?" he asked.

I told him I would if he approved. But I reminded him that this was purely an editorial expenditure: that we could look for no direct return except as to what result might come from making the magazine better.

"No direct return?" he echoed. "The only direct return there is. Where can you better

invest money than in making the magazine better?" he inquired. Then with a look at his watch I knew my time was up. He handed me back my carefully prepared statement unread, and in five minutes had approved, as near as he ever comes to directly approving of anything, of an expenditure of nearly a million dollars and the introduction of a factor in the modern magazine that was later, in its adaptation to commercial purposes, to revolutionize methods of advertising.

His readiness to transfer responsibility to the shoulders of others was demonstrated when, in 1909, the present imposing Curtis Building was in the hands of builders for bids. Mr. Curtis appointed a committee of five, and sailed away for Europe with his family and part of mine. When the bids were opened, they were found, as building bids have a way of doing, to vary materially. After days of careful investigation, it was decided that the highest bid was the most dependable. It also provided the longest period of construction: both natural handicaps when the question of finances was one, from necessity, to be kept prominently in mind, and the growth of business called for immediate larger quarters. The operation involved millions of dollars. It was decided to cable Mr.

Curtis full particulars, and ask his judgment. He was in Florence. Within twenty-four hours I received an answer: "How should I know? Too busy having good time." He had mentally referred the matter, millions though it represented, to his committee, and there he intended to leave it, fully and squarely.

When he returned, two months later, I naturally thought he would be interested in the outcome and the details. I waited for two days, and he never asked. Then I broached the subject,—and began to tell him.

But he cut in very quickly with: "Well, you accepted the best bid?"

I told him we had.

"When do we get the building?" was his next inquiry. Not a question had he asked as to the amount of the bid, until I voluntarily told him. And then, not a word of comment except: "Well, it's settled, isn't it?" Settle a thing with Mr. Curtis, no matter what it involves, and he dismisses it completely from his mind, leaving the details to be worked out by others, while he goes on to the next step.

It will be seen from these incidents that Mr. Curtis's editors are more than his editors. They are that, primarily, but he encourages the executive and business qualities in them which he

knows are there, so that they become, as they are, factors in the business as a whole. I have never known him to question a single expenditure on the part of his editors; in fact, he encourages them to spend liberally, but always wisely. "Get the best" is his constant admonition, "no matter what it costs." Another favorite slogan of his is: "The moment you stop spending money, you will stop making money." And he sets the pace. I was at his side through his most trying financial experiences, but never did he intimate that I should reduce editorial expenses. On the contrary, he would constantly advise me: "Don't economize on the magazine. Get the best, and we'll find the money somehow." When, with a bank balance so small as to be hardly visible, and with every depository full of "paper," I told him I had made a contract with William Dean Howells for his autobiography for ten thousand dollars, an unheard of price in those days, he smiled and said to me: "Good. That's the kind of stuff to get."

With such a personality to inspire and as a support, with "the sky as the limit" when it comes to expenditure for the right material, it is not strange that the Curtis publications have their present position, and that a Curtis editor

is immune to outside offers. Once a Curtis editor, with Mr. Curtis's confidence as an asset, it is essentially a case of always a Curtis editor!

CHAPTER XIX

THE SINGLE-TRACK MIND

WE have heard latterly quite a little of the "single-track mind," and generally the phrase is used in deprecation or derision. It was brought to life in use, curiously enough, by Woodrow Wilson himself, for him only to find its use later turned against him at every turn, particularly in his advocacy of the League of Nations. But it has been forgotten that at an earlier period the same thought, only it was then called "singleness of mind," was applied to Abraham Lincoln because, it was claimed, he could at first see nothing but the preservation of the Union and later nothing but the emancipation of the colored race.

A good deal depends upon what is on the track of a single-track mind. If it is something worthless, connoting a contracted vision, a limited horizon, or a mind closed to expansion, that is one thing. But a single-track mind may also imply a mind which works on only one fundamental principle.

It may truly, and I think happily, be said of

Mr. Curtis that he has a single-track mind, to a singular degree. It would be difficult to find a man whose mental processes are so perfectly simple, so direct, and so single of purpose. Mr. Curtis's problems are rarely ever complex: he does not allow them to become so. He decides them before they reach the complex stage. He has a remarkable faculty by this process for avoiding crises and the complexities which come with crises. A proposition of any sort is either right or wrong, to Mr. Curtis's mind: it cannot be anything else. There is no middle ground; no "trimming"; no wabbling; he thinks straight and clear, and his decisions are simple and direct. And by this simple process, his judgments are fair.

While it is safe to say that not one in ten of his men in the mechanical departments of his vast establishment have ever seen Mr. Curtis, to say naught of knowing him, his reputation for simple thinking and fair judgment is so well known to them all that they demonstrated their faith in him, in an instance years ago, the parallel of which would be difficult to find in the annals of industry.

A debatable matter had arisen between the men and the company, involving a question of Unionism which hours of discussion could not

seem to straighten out. The deadlock promised to continue, when the company suggested to the men that it was perfectly willing to refer the matter to arbitration and abide by the result. The men agreed, but when it was suggested that each side choose an arbitrator, and that the two so chosen select a third, the spokesman for the men asked: "Why three? Why not one, and let that one be Mr. Curtis?" When the company's officers recovered from their surprise, they, of course, acquiesced, and a meeting was arranged with Mr. Curtis. Each side explained its point of view, and when all had concluded, Mr. Curtis asked: "I think I understand. Now what do you expect me to do?"

It was explained that he had been chosen as arbitrator and that his decision as to which side, the company or the men, was right, would be accepted as final by both sides.

"That's easy enough," came the instant reply. "The men are right." And then with that inevitable look at his watch, which every one who knows him is familiar with, and knows so well the meaning of, he asked: "Is that all?" It was, and Mr. Curtis walked out, leaving an astonished lot of men with an indelible impression on their minds, by the utter simplicity and directness of his decision, made apparently

against himself and his own interests, but actually, though unconsciously, one of the most far-reaching decisions in point of morale ever rendered by him in favor of himself and his company. To him it meant nothing that his decision was against his company: his simple process was to listen, weigh the facts, and decide without a moment's hesitation and without a single word of explanation. He was asked to do what to him was a very simple thing, and he did it. And I question very much that when he reads of the incident here he will as much as recall it.

"It can't be right *and* wrong," I heard him say to one of his executives once who was explaining a matter which seemed to him to have in it the qualities of both. "It must be either right *or* wrong. Which is it?"

That is a single-track mind in its best sense; and it is easy to understand, through it, the mental ease which is always present with Mr. Curtis and which anyone in his presence instinctively feels. He looks out straight and clear at you and to the world, and is absolutely unafraid of problems, since his mental processes dissipate them and leave the road perfectly open and unobstructed ahead of him. His reasoning is never complicated by a wilderness of words. Consti-

tutionally a silent man, he uses very few words. I do not know of a man whose vocabulary is so carefully limited: he uses fewer words in the language than any man I know. He seems to have no use for more: he expresses himself adequately, but in the fewest possible simple words. He is not a linguist and knows no language save his own. His simple mental processes are, of course, at the bottom of this trait: he has all the language he has use for. He is the despair of a speaker at the other end of the telephone, whether it be a member of his family or some one he does not know. He plays no favorites in his crispness. It is not even the Biblical "Yea, yea" and "Nay, nay" with him: for he never repeats his crisp "Yes," "No," or "Sure." The most important question meets with the one-word answer; perfectly adequate, but a bit disconcerting as the dead silence follows, and you know he is wondering what else you want. Telephone authorities would never have to complain of lengthy or unnecessary conversations over their wires if all were as concisely brief as Mr. Curtis. I confess it is not conducive to sociability, but it is always adequately effective.

He will never ask "How are you?" when he sees you. He sees you, judges for himself, and hence, to his mental process, the question is

unnecessary and remains unasked. The social amenities of the occasion do not enter into his reckoning. Not for a moment does this imply that he is unsociable: on the contrary, he is sociability personified: loves his fellow men and delights to mix with them; he will joyously attend two public dinners on a single evening, and enjoy himself hugely at each; but the simplicity of his mind does not take in the spoken social persiflage. There seems to be no place for it to rest.

Latterly, however, Mr. Curtis seems to have found his way more freely to expression, more particularly in response, perhaps, to a demand for him to speak at dinners. But he is always the soul of brevity. He rarely ever prepares a speech, thinks little of it, and in the simplest manner possible says a few words and is through, —so that he never had the feeling of William Lyon Phelps, of Yale, who says that every time he accepts an invitation to speak he really makes four speeches: "the one I prepare in advance; the one I really deliver; the one I make on my way home; and the fourth, which is the one which the newspapers the next morning say I made, which bears absolutely no relation to any of the others."

No man places so little value on his opinions,

and hence he rarely expresses any. During all the years I have known him, I have only heard him criticise one man in public service. Rumors and gossip about people, known or unknown to him, he abhors; irritation and impatience become immediately apparent in the presence of anyone who repeats derogatory rumors about another. His estimates of people are always kindly, even where his friends know they are unjustified. It may truly be said of Mr. Curtis, in the fullest sense, that he bears no personal malice to anyone. He accepts every one as his friend, and even where he has been proven otherwise, sometimes to the Biblical seventy times seven, he is slow to believe the worst, and is inclined to palliate. Even if he arrives at the conclusion which his friends have arrived at months before, he never condemns; he merely but very effectually shuns. And yet, even in such cases, I have seen him go out of his way to seek out such a person in some assembly and chat with him as if nothing had ever happened, to all appearances absolutely forgetful of the past. He, literally, goes through life according to the sign that a friend of mine has on his office door:

"Come in without knocking,
Go out the same way."

CHAPTER XX

ACQUIRES "THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN"

IT was in 1910 Mr. Curtis discovered that in his new building he would have not only room to print a third magazine, but that he could conduct a trio of periodicals without considerably greater outlay than that required for a pair. Through a standardization of the product, too, the mechanical departments could be conducted on a more efficient basis with regard to their fullest capacity with three instead of two magazines.

He had successfully occupied the women's field with *The Ladies' Home Journal:* he was well on his way toward occupying the men's field with *The Saturday Evening Post.* As an official of the company once remarked: "Mr. Curtis is quite content, if given the woman's field and the men's field, to leave the rest of the country to the other periodicals." But he was not of that idea.

He looked over the entire field, and decided that the agricultural world gave the greatest promise. There were innumerable State agri-

cultural weeklies, and there were two or three national agricultural journals. But as he looked over these latter, he could not see that they covered in their editorial matter the business side of farming, the marketing and distribution problems of the crop and the conduct of the farm on a business basis. In other words, he had a feeling that what *The Saturday Evening Post* was proving to business men, another periodical of a business nature adapted to agriculture could prove to the farmer. He perceived that the whole question of farming was assuming larger proportions: that the colleges, with agricultural courses, were producing a more scientific type of farmer, and he became convinced that the time was ripe for the establishment of a periodical of national agricultural contents and appeal.

He laid his plan before Mr. Harry N. McKinney, a member of the advertising firm of N. W. Ayer and Son, who agreed with his diagnosis of the situation.

"Why don't you do," Mr. McKinney argued, "as you did with *The Saturday Evening Post:* buy a paper of established reputation and tradition: *The Country Gentleman*, published at Albany?"

"Is it for sale?" asked Mr. Curtis.

"I don't know that it is for sale exactly," returned the advertising man, "but I think it can be bought. Gilbert Tucker owns it and runs it because it has been so long in his family as for any other reason. He has made a good living out of it; he has not been well of late, and might be induced to sell."

Mr. Curtis looked over *The Country Gentleman*, learned something of its history, and decided that his friend's suggestion was worth trying. He went to Albany, called on Mr. Tucker, and stated the nature of his errand. He had found that Mr. McKinney had preceded him and paved the way for the negotiation.

Mr. Tucker was not anxious to sell the paper which had borne the family imprint for eighty years, but he was convinced that he would have to sell some day in view of his advancing years, and felt confident that the paper would be in good hands if it were conducted by Mr. Curtis and his company. The money matter was gone over, but no conclusion could be reached, and the visit ended without a sale.

From a business point of view, *The Country Gentleman* was not of great value. But it never had departed from its high reputation. It was high-grade, but it was high-grade of the type of

fifty years ago, and Mr. Tucker was intensely proud of it. It had no plant. Its printing and presswork were done in a printing-office. The fact that it was not much of a success financially did not bother Mr. Tucker particularly. He had a moderate fortune. If he had been younger he might have been inclined to buy mechanical equipment, and conform somewhat to the times; but he was not disposed to do so. And yet to sell the publication caused him grief.

All the same, the matter did not come to a head in that interview. A little later Mr. Curtis wrote asking Mr. Tucker for another interview, and he again went to Albany, where he was to meet the Albany publisher in a hotel.

While he was waiting in the lobby of the hotel for Mr. Tucker to arrive, Mr. Herbert Myrick, publisher of a number of agricultural papers at Springfield, Massachusetts, came up to him. Like a flash, Mr. Curtis remembered that Myrick had some time previously spoken of *The Country Gentleman* to him: what a good property it was to build upon and what he would do with it if he could get it. It made no impression upon the mind of Mr. Curtis at the time, but now he recalled the talk. He concluded that Myrick and he were in Albany for the same purpose.

"Hello! What are you doing here?" Mr. Curtis asked.

"Oh, nothing in particular," answered Myrick. "Just looking around. What brings you to Albany?"

"Business," succintly answered Mr. Curtis.

Myrick's answer seemed to Mr. Curtis to confirm his suspicions. He now posted himself close to the main entrance of the hotel, and when Mr. Tucker appeared, "the way I pushed him into the elevator and whisked him into my room must have surprised him," said Mr. Curtis.

The sale was arranged at this meeting. Mr. Curtis offered one hundred thousand dollars for the property, and Mr. Tucker accepted. The next day the legal papers were drawn and signed. When this was done, and the paper was actually his property, Mr. Curtis turned to Mr. Tucker and asked: "What negotiations had Herbert Myrick with you for the paper?"

"Myrick?" echoed Mr. Tucker. "Why, none at all. Oh, no," he added, "I wouldn't sell the paper to anyone but you. I certainly wouldn't let any agricultural publisher say he got my scalp."

Mr. Curtis found that he had bought little except the prestige of *The Country Gentleman.*

While ostensibly the paper had twenty-five thousand circulation, hundreds of its subscribers had not paid their subscriptions for years, and when these were removed from the list, little remained. But Mr. Curtis had not expected much more, and was not disappointed. It was again a case of building on a good name, the same as in the case of *The Saturday Evening Post.* And he did it.

On July 8, 1911, the first number of *The Country Gentleman* appeared with the imprint of The Curtis Publishing Company, and the work of putting the paper on a new basis was begun. The advertising solicitation was incorporated into the Curtis department, and another quest for editors was started.

It is one of the most curious facts that, for all the development of the magazine business during the past twenty years, the supply of capable editors for magazines of any description is still far behind the demand. Never has any branch of the publishing business had such an expansion as that of the magazine, whether of weekly or monthly issuance, and yet few outstanding editors have been developed. While the scarcity of men of pre-eminent ability is noticeable in every field of industry, one would imagine that in a business where the expansion

has been of such unheard-of proportions, the supply of editorial ability would, to some measure at least, have been developed and kept pace with the demand. But it has not been so. Hence the search for an editor for the third Curtis publication was a long and arduous one. The agricultural editorial field seemed to offer even less promising ability than the literary field. Finally J. P. Marquis was placed in editorial charge until his removal to Washington brought Harry O. Thompson, and succeeding him came Barton W. Currie, who, upon his assumption of the editorship of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, was in turn succeeded by the present editor, Mr. J. O. Pickett. Slowly, a competent corps of editors and authoritative contributors on agricultural subjects was assembled, and the paper began to show the strength and authority in its contents which was desired for it.

The financial investment in the paper was large: exceeding in amount the total investment in *The Saturday Evening Post* before it showed profit.

Disbelief in the venture prevailed on all sides. The most general and at the same time most curious expectations of failure for the weekly were based on the opinion that no agricultural paper could be edited from a city; that Mr.

Curtis was not a farmer, had never lived on a farm, and therefore could know nothing of farming. Hence how could he produce an authoritative farm paper? But the fact was overlooked that Mr. Curtis does not edit his publications; that he had no idea of either directing the editorial policy or editing the weekly. His editor would, of necessity, have to be conversant with the farm and its problems, and he would, in turn, command the services of those writers who had a first-hand knowledge of farming. The country was literally raked from the Atlantic to the Pacific for those writers who knew from practical experience how the efficiency of the farmer could be increased and how the soil could be made to produce more for the farmer and what should be done with the fruits of his toil for the greatest benefit to the man who did the work.

After the investment of two million dollars in the newcomer in the Curtis organization, the corner was turned in 1917 and *The Country Gentleman* began to show its face on the favorable side of the ledger.

The company has now owned the periodical for twelve years, and despite the difficult economic conditions which for the past two years have confronted the farmer and those engaged in

the industries related to the farm, the circulation of *The Country Gentleman* has steadily mounted, until it is now climbing each week toward its goal of the first million.

Mr. Curtis had completed his string of magazines, and had seen them well established. He was now destined to branch out into a field of publishing which he had never dreamed of entering: that of the daily newspaper. He had always asserted that he would never venture into this field. But it is so often the very thing we say that we will never do that eventually we do! Never is a long time, and the combination of circumstances, seemingly beyond our control, is sometimes as curious as inexplicable.

CHAPTER XXI

A BUSINESS PULLED OUT OF THE AIR

MILLIONS of people read each year millions of copies of newspapers and magazines, and yet few have the slightest idea, or even stop to think of the peculiar nature of the business of publishing their favorite newspaper or periodical.

Save for the presses or building which a publishing company may own, it has not a single tangible asset in the business itself. A newspaper has an Associated Press franchise which is of value in its city of publication, but a magazine has not even this asset. It has a copyright from the United States Government protecting the title of the magazine, but even this becomes nul by reason of non-publication. Offer the property of a magazine for sale and what is there to buy? the good-will of the public toward the magazine as vested in its name. That is all. There is no patent; no definite formula; no concrete commodity, as in the case, for example, of Ivory Soap or an Eastman Kodak, which the purchaser

can go on making after the methods employed by the previous owner.

George Horace Lorimer once gave an excellent description of the publishing business when he described it as a business purely of buying and selling brains: a business based upon having ideas and of making other men carry them out. In no other human activity may one be so absolutely sure that sins of commission will find one out, he argued. They are printed for all the world to read. On every issue of a periodical there is a plebiscite to determine its worthiness or unworthiness, whether it shall be encouraged to continue or forced to suspend. Consequently, no business so quickly succumbs to dry-rot, to apathy, or content.

An editor deals with a silent audience. The actor sees his audience, for example, each evening, and if a "line" in his play does not "get across" and evoke the laughter or applause he seeks for it, he can gear it up the next evening or omit it. The editor never sees his audience; hears comparatively little from it except in condemnation. Fifty-two times, if it is a weekly; twelve times if it is a monthly, he appears before his public for its suffrage, and only once a year does he really know whether he has succeeded or failed, when the time comes for his readers to

renew their subscriptions. If they do not renew, it is too late to rectify his mistakes, even if he knows what they are.

Drugs may be prepared by formula, steel made true by process, and cigars standardized, as Mr. Lorimer says, and then, if they are pushed by intelligent methods, the fortunes of the manufacturing company are safe. But so long as the word counts for more than the type in which it is fixed, so long as the story counts for more than the picture which draws the eye to it, and so long as literature becomes a lifeless thing in the very act of conforming, a periodical can never be standardized.

So that publishing is a business that, in all its essentials, is literally pulled out of the air, leaving nothing behind it except a memory, some presses which deteriorate from the moment the wheels are first started and some type which becomes battered from the first time it is used.

In no other business do labor and material add so little to the value of the product. The most faultless typography, the most sumptuous paper fall dead from the press unless they mirror life. The product of every machine except the printing-press is itself a concrete thing of value which the manufacturer sells and the buyer consumes. All that the printing-press does is to fix an ab-

straction for a moment until the buyer has transferred it from the mind of the writer to his own. Then, for him, the magazine is simply an empty package to be thrown away or laid aside.

A publisher, then, has really nothing concrete to sell to his subscribers, only the thoughts of other men. Nor has he really anything concrete to sell to his advertisers: only a glance and a moment's attention from his readers. Where another business may live a lifetime on one idea, as Mr. Lorimer well points out, and wax fat and prosperous selling it over and over again, the publisher must have new ideas for every month, and each month's product must be different. When a number of his magazine is off press, he is actually through; he has nothing on hand; his warehouse is empty; his patterns are worthless. There is no comfortable stock, manufactured months ahead, to meet a known standard of public taste: a fixed demand. He has nothing of this sense of security when he walks through his plant. The last number of his magazine may have caused pæans of joy in the minds of thousands; the next number may fall flat and get only condemnation.

A publisher's entire stock in trade is under his hat, month by month, week by week, or day by day, whatever the period of issuance of his peri-

odical may be. It is not even in the heads of the dozen or so editors in his offices, for they merely seek and select: it is really in the minds of hundreds of persons scattered throughout the country. And, unless, under his leadership, the men in his offices can again and again and again make a new thing that will reflect ever-changing and yet eternally changeless human nature, the publisher is a bankrupt.

Ever new must each number be, and yet always the same, so as to bear the stamp of the familiar which the reader expects in his favorite magazine.

With this, which in all likelihood will be a new view of the publishing business to thousands who have never diagnosed it, or thought about it, the achievement of Mr. Curtis assumes a significance and dimensions compared to which the successful careers of men in other lines of business takes on a placid and comfortable hue.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PURCHASE OF "THE PUBLIC LEDGER"

ONE morning Mr. Curtis found in his mail a letter from Adolph S. Ochs, proprietor of the *New York Times*, who also owned the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, asking if he could see Mr. Curtis some day in New York. Shortly afterward, Mr. Curtis being in New York, Mr. Ochs called and said he would like to have Mr. Curtis associated with him on *The Ledger*.

"How?" asked Mr. Curtis.

"Any old way," was the answer.

"No, I am not interested to go into newspaper work," returned Mr. Curtis, and he made a move as if to leave.

"Well," said Ochs, "what would you do, or try to do, with *The Ledger* if you were me and owned it?"

"What would I do?" echoed the Philadelphia publisher. "I would make it what the *London Times* was under John Delane."

"You couldn't do that in Philadelphia, Mr. Curtis," said Mr. Ochs. "In New York, yes."

"There is where I don't agree with you at all,"

returned Mr. Curtis. "Forty years ago Samuel Bowles demonstrated in Springfield, Massachusetts, what could be done with a newspaper away from the metropolis. Philadelphia is midway between the commercial capital and the national capital, and what can be done in Springfield can be done in Philadelphia."

But Mr. Ochs smiled and shook his head. "No, Mr. Curtis, it can't be done."

And so the two parted.

He happened to tell of this visit to one of his Philadelphia friends, John Gribbel.

"Well, why don't you buy *The Public Ledger?*" he asked Mr. Curtis.

"I buy it?" echoed Mr. Curtis. "Why should I do a thing like that? I am not a newspaper man; know nothing of the newspaper business. I wouldn't touch *The Ledger* with a ten-foot pole."

"If you'll buy it, I'll go in with you financially," persisted Mr. Gribbel.

"Not for me," conclusively answered Mr. Curtis. "I don't want to tie myself to the daily newspaper grind. It doesn't interest me."

And while the statement was made with his customary finality, it so happened that it was not to be the end of the suggestion. For each time that he would meet either Adolph Ochs, in

New York, or his brother, George W. Ochs, who was editing the paper in Philadelphia, the subject would be renewed.

"No," Mr. Curtis would say, "not for me. I give you my word I am not interested."

A little later Adolph Ochs met Mr. Curtis, and reopened the subject with: "Mr. Curtis, I'll sell you forty-nine per cent of the stock of *The Ledger* at a price to be determined by you after you get into it and fix its value."

"But I don't want forty-nine per cent of *The Ledger* or any per cent of it," insisted Mr. Curtis.

The subject was again dropped until the next meeting.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Ochs. "I'll sell you fifty-one per cent of *The Ledger* stock, and then you'll control it."

"I don't want fifty-one per cent; I don't want to control *The Ledger*," again responded Mr. Curtis.

This went on for a year, and never did the two meet but the subject was brought up by the New York publisher.

There was one thought which lingered in the mind of Mr. Curtis which was to prove the seed that was to germinate and goad him into action. *The Public Ledger* had long been one of the distinctive institutions of Philadelphia; it

was part of its life; it had stood for what the best people in the city had stood for; it *was* Philadelphia in essence and spirit. That this essentially Philadelphia institution was owned by New York capital was extremely distasteful to loyal Philadelphians; it seemed wrong. So it seemed to Mr. Curtis, and as his mind lingered on the point the incongruity of it became more and more apparent to him.

Then he noticed on his travels that when business men in other cities spoke of newspapers, they rarely, if ever, mentioned the newspapers of Philadelphia. The newspapers of New York, Boston, Chicago, even of Springfield, Massachusetts, would be cited, but rarely, if ever, was there mention of a single Philadelphia newspaper. This was an increasing mortification to Mr. Curtis.

With these two thoughts in his mind, he was, therefore, far more receptive to Mr. Ochs's next attack upon him when he met him in New York.

"Mr. Ochs," said Mr. Curtis at this meeting, "I'll tell you what I'll do: if you will sell me *The Public Ledger* lock, stock, and barrel I'll consider it. But nothing less would attract me."

This offer was as unexpected as it seemed

drastic to Mr. Ochs, who rejoined that it would be like selling out his brother.

"Well," said Mr. Curtis, "your brother has been editing *The Ledger* for ten years. I know nothing of the newspaper field, and it will take time for me to learn. I will agree to keep your brother in his present position for two years."

The two brothers consulted, and it was agreed that the sale should be made. Mr. Curtis now offered Mr. Gribbel a chance to come in as part purchaser of the paper, and he agreed to take a third interest.

So it came about that on January 1, 1913, *The Public Ledger* became the property of Mr. Curtis and Mr. Gribbel, and the first issue was published on that day under their ownership.

The purchase price was two million dollars, which included the newspaper, its machinery, and the building. Some confusion has arisen in the mind of the public that an interest in *The Ledger* was owned at the time of purchase by Drexel and Company, and is still owned by that banking-house. This misunderstanding has arisen from the fact that at the time of the purchase of the property, Mr. Ochs transferred to Mr. Curtis, in the purchase price, the payment of certain bonds held by the A. J. Drexel Estate [the owners of *The Public Ledger*

previous to Mr. Ochs's purchase], a specified portion of which was to be payable, semi-annually, for a term of years. In accordance with the provisions of the bonds, these payments are made to the Pennsylvania Company for the Insurance of Lives and Granting of Annuities for the benefit of the heirs of the A. J. Drexel Estate, and with these payments or with the bonds the banking-house of Drexel and Company have no direct or indirect relation.

"Your controlling motive in purchasing *The Public Ledger* was, therefore, that it should be restored to a Philadelphia ownership?" Mr. Curtis was asked once.

"Yes," was the reply, "that and the desire to make of it a paper of national and international influence which would be a credit to Philadelphia."

"There was no thought, then, in your mind of its purchase as a commercial proposition?"

Mr. Curtis smiled. "On the contrary, I knew I was in for sinking a pile of money in it. Knowing nothing of the newspaper business, I knew I was headed for mistakes and that I would have to pay dearly for them until I found my way. I knew, too, that to make the kind of a newspaper that I think *The Ledger* should be would cost large sums of money, and that

THE OLD PUBLIC LEDGER BUILDING

even if I could make money out of it, it would be a long time before I could hope for any profits, if they came at all. But that I did not think of. I felt I could afford to try and see if I could make the kind of a newspaper in Philadelphia that I had in mind, and that I felt confident could come from Philadelphia and not necessarily, as Mr. Ochs and others believed, only from New York."

Mr. Curtis at once set about a reorganization of *The Public Ledger* in all its departments, in order to equip it for the place he intended it should occupy in American journalism. It had a circulation of about forty thousand copies per day, and its price was one cent. Mr. Curtis liked neither: the circulation figures were too small; the selling price not adequate to make a good newspaper.

In an advertising sense, there seemed to be no such thing as stability of rates; special rebates were permitted to special advertisers; "cut rates" were general. Mr. Curtis's first step was to stabilize these rates. He reorganized the personnel of the advertising department, and among those whose resignations were requested was that of George F. Goldsmith, the advertising manager, who, Mr. Curtis concluded (without due investigation, which

was contrary to Mr. Curtis's custom), must have been largely responsible for the chaotic condition of the advertising rates. Goldsmith resigned, and, being an excellent advertising solicitor, quickly identified himself with the Albert Frank Advertising Agency, in New York City, which makes a specialty of placing financial advertising in newspapers.

A friend of Goldsmith said to him: "Now is your chance to get back at *The Ledger*. You have it in your hands to turn some of the most desirable financial advertising away from *The Ledger* and into the other Philadelphia newspapers."

"No," answered Goldsmith. "That I couldn't do. I was married while I was on *The Ledger;* my children were born while I was with it; my home was bought from my income from it. I couldn't go back on *The Ledger* now; it means too much to me."

And he conscientiously turned into *The Ledger* all the financial advertising which he felt belonged to it as the logical newspaper medium for that class of business in Philadelphia.

Goldsmith's attitude reached Mr. Curtis's ears, and he wondered whether he had done an injustice. He investigated, "better late than never," and found that Goldsmith had not only never approved of the cut rates or

special rates, but had strenuously opposed them at every point.

Mr. Curtis went to New York at once, apologized to Goldsmith, explained how he had made his mistake, and offered him a reinstatement on the paper. Goldsmith gladly accepted the chance to return to his old paper, and is today treasurer of the company, a member of the board of directors, and recently celebrated his forty years of association, barring the brief interval in New York, with the paper.

With new presses installed and under order, Mr. Curtis decided that he could use his equipment with greater economy and efficiency if his machinery were in use practically all day. This meant an evening edition, and taking advantage of the public demand for war news, the first issue of *The Evening Public Ledger* appeared on September 14, 1914, the initial number having a circulation of forty thousand copies, which has since been increased to its present figure of two hundred thousand copies per day.

Meanwhile, Mr. Curtis was travelling all over the country, visiting newspaper plants and learning all he could about the mechanics of the business. Here he picked up an editor; there an advertising man; again a special writer; and step by step strengthened his organization.

Knowing that George W. Ochs, as editor,

would doubtless, at the end of his two years of service, wish to join his brother on the *New York Times;* he looked around for his successor, and after a trial of one or two men settled on John J. Spurgeon, then one of the most valuable editors on the *New York World*, who, at first, declined the post, but later accepted it and remained editor until his association with *The Washington Post* this year.

The evening edition had its own corps of editors, and after a trial or two here, as on the morning edition, Mr. Curtis finally settled on David E. Smiley as editor, who, upon Mr. Spurgeon's resignation, assumed the editorship of the morning paper as well.

As the evening edition did not have the Associated Press franchise, and could not print the news of that service, Mr. Curtis purchased, in June, 1918, from John Wanamaker, *The Evening Telegraph*, an evening paper of tradition which had long been published in Philadelphia, and with it obtained the right of the desired Associated Press service.

He now placed in charge of his business department, John C. Martin, a son-in-law of Mrs. Curtis, and with a sympathetic interest, the new business manager seconded every effort that Mr. Curtis made to build up the paper.

With his personnel now fairly well in hand, and with orders placed for new and modern machinery throughout, he began to enlarge and expand his news features. The outlay of money was considerable, with no profits coming in or in sight, and Mr. Curtis did not feel it fair to Mr. Gribbel that his share should so long be tied up with no return. So he bought out Mr. Gribbel's share.

Feeling now that he was spending his own money, Mr. Curtis branched out, regardless of the deficit incurred, in securing the best editorial writers obtainable and establishing a foreign cable service which would encircle the globe. He purchased the entire service of the *London Times*, and continued this until he established his own foreign service, with headquarters in London, Paris, Tokio, Berlin, and nearly all the principal capitals of Europe. He confounded newspaper men with his liberal expenditure in cable tolls, his telegraph bills averaging from sixteen thousand to twenty thousand dollars per month. So comprehensive and valuable became this service that newspapers all through the country asked to share in it, until to-day this and other special branches of *The Public Ledger* are served daily to over three hundred newspapers in the United States.

He canvassed the world for writers of authority. He engaged Doctor E. J. Dillon, an authority on European politics. Sir George Paish, former financial adviser to the British Government, wrote on foreign finance; Wu Ting Fang became special correspondent from China; wherever an authority on some subject presented himself, Mr. Curtis engaged his pen.

One day he met former President Taft in Montreal, who deplored the fact that he had to travel so much. Mr. Curtis asked him why he did it.

"If I didn't do it," answered Mr. Taft with his inimitable chuckle, "you would have to give me a job, Mr. Curtis."

"I'll give you a job, and a good one, too," returned the publisher.

The former President saw that Mr. Curtis was in earnest, and asked: "Do you mean it?"

"I certainly do," said Mr. Curtis decisively.

"All right," returned Mr. Taft. "Drop off at New Haven, and let us talk it over."

Mr. Curtis did so, and suggested that Mr. Taft write signed editorials for *The Ledger*.

"That would be new for me," meditatively returned the ex-President, "and I don't know that I could do it. Still, I have a daughter at Bryn Mawr, you know, who is an excellent English scholar, and she might help me."

"That's exactly what I don't want," returned Mr. Curtis. "I don't want polished literary essays; I want editorials that will reflect your direct opinions; written by you and you alone, straight from the shoulder, then laid away in your desk overnight, the heat taken out of them in the morning and sent in to *The Ledger*."

Mr. Taft was interested, thought over the matter for a few days and then accepted, writing with success on *The Ledger's* editorial page for nearly three years, until his accession to the chief-justiceship of the United States made it necessary to relinquish the work. Mr. Curtis had meanwhile engaged Colonel Edward M. House to write also on the editorial page.

The moment the ambassador to Germany, James W. Gerard, returned to the United States, and his promised written account of relations with the former Kaiser was the speculation of the entire country, Mr. Curtis called on him and said he would like to buy the material.

"All right," said the ambassador, "I'll sell it to you, Mr. Curtis."

"How much?" asked Mr. Curtis.

"Fifty thousand dollars," was the answer.

"I'll pay it," returned Mr. Curtis.

As soon as he could, Mr. Curtis increased the price of his papers from one cent to two cents.

Then, when the shortage of paper came during the war and after it, he found himself put to it to secure enough white paper for his growing papers. The *Philadelphia Press* had a very desirable paper contract: the paper itself was not successful. Mr. Curtis bought it, in October, 1920, for one million dollars, figuring that if he could add and hold one-half of *The Press* circulation of thirty thousand copies a day, and one hundred thousand copies of its Sunday issue, to *The Ledger* circulation, it would pay him as an investment and also secure the paper contract. To his own surprise, he held the entire *Press* circulation.

Mr. Curtis's first newspaper venture was now forging well ahead, and it began to look, after five years, as if the losses might cease on the paper and the financial corner soon be turned.

But as soon as any margin of profit began to show itself on the books, Mr. Curtis, to the despair of his business department, began to spend it all and more on bettering his newspaper.

The Public Ledger in all its editions, morning and evening, is now on a sound financial basis. Without the least desire to make money out of the venture, except for his satisfaction in mak-

THE NEW PUBLIC LEDGER BUILDING

ing of it a practical business proposition, Mr. Curtis finds himself, at the end of ten years, with his first newspaper property netting a generous annual profit.

But he is not through spending his profits. He has purchased the entire square bounded by Chestnut, Sansom, Sixth, and Seventh Streets, and has already erected on it the first unit of what he has in mind shall be the finest modern newspaper building in the United States. It will adjoin the Curtis Building, and its frontage on Sixth Street, facing Independence Square, will, in its architecture, be sympathetically similar to the colonial feeling of the building which houses his magazines. Gradually, he will erect the various units of this great building until he builds up the entire square, and thus erect to his success as a newspaper publisher a monument similar to that which now stands as a monument to his success as a magazine publisher.

Mr. Curtis has a small room which he calls his office in the Public Ledger Building, and he circulates between this room and his office in the Curtis Building.

A friend recently found Mr. Curtis in this little *Ledger* office, and commented, as he looked about the room: "Quite a change from

your palatial office in the Curtis Building. I should think you would feel cramped here."

"Not much, I don't," was the instant reply. "I like it here. It suits me much better than all that space and gorgeousness over there," and he waved his hand in the direction of the wonderful Curtis Building, of which a man recently said to Mr. Curtis: "It must make you proud to look at that monument to you."

"Monument?" asked Mr. Curtis in surprise. "Why 'monument'? I'm not dead."

Mr. Curtis may have known little or nothing of the newspaper business, as he says, when he began. But he has certainly learned, and not allowed the grass to grow under his active feet during the process of building up *The Public Ledger* and of firmly putting it on the map of the great newspapers of the United States.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MAN IN A PERSONAL CHAT

WE were chatting one evening in the family circle, and the talk drifted into those personal questions from which Mr. Curtis so instinctively shies and which are sure to bring about a complete silence on his part, except at such rare intervals as this happened to be.

"How do you really regard your success?" he was asked.

"I don't regard it; I can't realize it. Of course, it would be a foolish and false modesty to say I wasn't conscious of something having happened. The evidences of it are on every hand," and he looked around the luxurious saloon of his yacht on which he was living. "But I don't realize it, principally I suppose because of the fact that I am too busy to let my mind rest on the past. A busy man can't, except for his mistakes, and these he picks up and capitalizes. But if an effort is successful, why rest your mind on it? There it is. It is

done. Now go on to the next thing. And so any man who succeeds is always busy with his present undertakings and his future plans.

"People, of course, speak of my success to me, but I feel about that as they do when they speak of this yacht and exclaim on its beauty. I look around and wish I could see its beauty with their fresh eyes. But I see it every day; I am of it; I don't see it as they see it. And so when a man makes a success he does not see it as others see it. He was of it all the time; it is familiar to him. It is not half so wonderful to him as it is to others.

"Then there is a vast difference in the anticipation of a success and its realization, just as there is between the perspective and the retrospective. When I was a boy I used to think it was wonderful to be a judge, or a mayor or a governor or some high official like that: only the exceptional man could ever hope to gain these offices. Now when I look at my friends who have been or are mayors and governors and judges I don't understand it: they are not exceptional men, and I think the positions must have been cheapened since I regarded them with such awe as a boy."

"Suppose one of your grandsons should come in now and ask you which is the greatest single

MR. CURTIS'S STEAM YACHT "LYNDONIA"

one factor in a successful life, what would you answer him?" I ventured.

"It is pretty hard to get it down to one, because there are several. But as near as I can come to it, it is that, granting a boy's honesty and willingness to work, his most valuable possession is to have a vision; a goal; an ambitious point for which to work. He won't always reach it. He will be like the eagle who flies at the sun: he knows very well he can't reach it, but he tries. And that is the point: a goal to try for. It doesn't make much difference in which direction his ambition or imagination pictures the vision: I mean the particular trade or profession. He may not go in that direction finally at all. Few do. I didn't."

"How do you mean you didn't?" was asked him.

"I had my dream, my goal, and worked away at it. It was always with me. But here I turned out to be a publisher, which wasn't my goal at all."

"What was your goal?" his daughter asked.

"To be a merchant. This was natural enough. Portland being a port city, it was naturally a merchandising city. It had in those days a large water and foreign trade. Nearly every man who amounted to anything was a

merchant. The men I looked up to as successes were merchants. Presto! I was to be a merchant.

"When the Portland fire wiped out my printing plant, and I became a salesman behind the counter of a dry-goods store, I was sure I was going to be a merchant, and all my thoughts were in that direction. I used to try to decide whether I would buy the business in which I was employed, or whether I would establish a new dry-goods store. But it was always to be the largest and best dry-goods store. There was never any doubt in my mind on that point. I went so far as to look around my boy friends and try to decide which one I would ask to go in with me and be my partner: I tried to figure out whose father would have the most money to back his son, because I knew I wouldn't have the capital. I even studied the spot where I would build my large store. I would watch the tide of travel on Congress Street, and see on which side most folks walked and where was the central spot. I decided it was where the Preble House stood and stands to-day, and that spot I fixed as the definite place where I would build a huge store. See now how far off I was to the particular line I would follow. But I always had the vision of the best and the largest, with myself as the owner.

"It makes no difference in what direction a boy's vision takes him, but let him have one. Some boys, attracted by the uniform of a policeman and the power he exerts, dream of being a policeman. All right, but let them always dream of being the best policeman that ever walked a beat and then of being the chief of police. If I dreamed of being a pirate, I would, at once, get all the books I could about pirates, see what they do, determine how I could do it better than any pirate that ever lived, and then be the greatest pirate in history. Always the best; then the greatest follows.

"Suppose my grandson went into a machine-shop as a common hand. All right. The moment he took the job he ought to look around the shop and say to himself 'I am going to own this shop some day; this, or a bigger and better one.' Then of course he must come down to earth and begin at once to lay the foundation-stones for his own machine-shop."

"How?" I asked.

"Well," said Mr. Curtis as he thought for a moment, "there is the much-overworked word of service, but that expresses it. A boy begins any success he may have by giving service, and giving that service in the smallest things. It may be in sweeping out an office. Let him

sweep out that office better than it has ever been swept before. His employer will notice it. But he shouldn't sweep it with his employer in his eye. Just sweep it as if his life depended upon it. If he is asked just to lick stamps on letters, let him lick those stamps better than any other boy: lick them on straight and quicker. In other words, giving the fullest service, no matter how seemingly small may be the job in hand. Thoroughness in everything."

"Can such a boy push along his own promotion in his job?" I asked.

"Indeed he can. By giving full service in his own job, never working by the clock, and then keeping his eye on the job ahead of him, studying it, helping the man who holds it, learning it, so that if sickness, or discharge, or resignation comes along, he knows what the position calls for and can step right into it."

"As you look back, do you believe there are more or less chances for a boy than in your day?"

"More," was the decided answer. "Never was there a time when there are so many chances. Business is just crying out for big men, and can't find them. There is no comparison in the larger number of chances to-day

than when I was a boy. It was poor pickings then compared with to-day."

"Does business of to-day rest on greater honesty than in your early days?"

"Unquestionably," was the instant answer. "Take in retail business. In my early days, the price was what you could get. There was no one-price principle. Then came Oak Hall, a large clothing house in Boston, with the announcement that only one price would prevail at that establishment. It was revolutionary. That was the beginning. Now, the one-price principle is universal. Why? Because it pays. Merchants have come to realize that honest dealing means permanent customers. I don't like the saying that 'Honesty is the best policy' because I believe a man should be honest for a higher principle than mere policy. But it is true, just the same. It is the only safe policy. A man can't last on any other. An increasing number of men are constantly discovering that they can make more money by being honest than in any other way, and whether they are honest from principle or policy, the fact remains that they are. I don't know, nor can any one know, whether the large run of business men are more inherently honest to-day than forty years ago. But there is no doubt there

are more men doing honest business and that business standards are to-day infinitely higher than at any time in the history of American business."

"What was the one impelling motive with you?" I asked, as I paved the way to another and more personal question.

"To get somewhere, to the top," was the answer.

"What one factor more than any other brought you there?" I now asked. And the absolute self-effacement of the answer is characteristic of the man.

"Advertising," was the instant answer.

There was no use, I knew, to ask the personal quality in himself: I knew the veil of silence would immediately settle down on the talk, and it was unusual to have Mr. Curtis talk as he was talking.

"Advertising?" I echoed.

"Sure," he answered. "That's what made me whatever I am."

"Do you believe that advertising has been carried to its fullest power?" I asked.

"No, indeed," was the answer. "It has improved since my day. But the surface has only been scratched. So few understand good advertising. I use up my days trying to find men

who can write an effective advertisement. They think they can. But they can't. They don't understand the secret."

"What is the secret of a good advertisement?" I cut in.

"You have to start with the fact that nobody is interested in your business or what you have to say about it. Now, then, how can you gain such a person's interest or excite his curiosity as to what you have to say and to sell? You must first realize that fact, and then project yourself into his position and mental attitude. You are determined to sell him your goods. He is not a particle interested. So, you must first of all write in such a way as to awaken him to the fact that you are in the world and have something that he ought to buy. You have to take his position toward you, not your position toward him, and write to him, clearly, briefly and readably from his angle. You must say to yourself: 'If I were in that man's place, knowing nothing of what I have to sell him, he thinking when he does think that he doesn't want it, would this advertisement awaken his interest and get his eye and mind turned toward me?' If you can convince yourself of that point, the advertisement is good; otherwise, it represents money wasted. To

catch his eye, you must of course present the advertisement in an attractive dress. I believe in large space, with plenty of white space, which so many advertisers look upon as waste space. I don't. To me, it makes an advertisement stand out,—and that it must do to attract attention. I know there is another side to the question: the many-worded and closely set advertisement, advertisers tell me, are read and bring results. It may be. I have always gotten larger returns with the advertisement that says little, says it well, set in a striking way, with plenty of air around it. But my opinion in this respect, despite my own success with it, is discounted, because it is felt that I have white space to sell. But my conviction would be exactly the same if I hadn't; only folks won't believe me."

"Had you any other impelling motive in your young manhood?" I ventured.

"Well, I suppose there was another," smilingly answered Mr. Curtis. "It seems a bit unworthy as I look back upon it now. But I must confess it was there, and it helped. We were the 'poor relations' of the family: that is, my father's brothers and sisters were all comfortably off and well-to-do. We were not. I would visit these uncles and aunts with my parents. We were

never made to feel our lack of means: my father's folks were too well-bred for that. Nevertheless, it did not escape my attention that such was the fact. It was not my father's fault that it was so: he was more the artist and musician than the business man. And so, boylike, I used to clinch my little fists, set my jaw and say to myself 'I'll show them some day.' It wasn't alone the pride in the matter. I wanted to give greater comfort to my parents,—and I did to my mother. My father passed away in 1885, before I was well on my way. It was a boyish determination, but it helped me enormously. It helped to set my resolution: to make me realize my vision."

"And you certainly did 'show' them," I interrupted.

"Well, yes," answered Mr. Curtis, "but there wasn't a particle of the satisfaction in it that I thought as a boy there would be, not even in the sad part of it, that I paid the funeral expenses of nearly all of them."

"And now what, as you look ahead?" I asked.

"More work. I am not done. I have the sense of accomplishment, of achievement, just as strong as I ever had it. I am going right on."

He is, for it is singularly true of Mr. Curtis that his years have nothing to do with his age.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SEED OF SUCCESS

"THERE is no doubt of it," said Mr. Curtis one day, "that one of the greatest factors in success is for a young fellow to learn thrift, and learn it in his earliest days. He must teach himself to save. What would I have done, for instance, at the time Walter Goold left me after the first issue of *Young America* if I couldn't have had immediate resource in what I had saved up, and thus bought my first printing-press and type? I might have borrowed the small sum necessary, yes, but that is a bad practice for a boy when he has had a chance to save, no matter how little. I saved by five and ten cents at a time from the small income of my newspaper route, and finally I could save a dollar at a time. Then when the moment of need came, I had it. And that is the point of saving.

"Take a young man who follows this policy of saving; he gets a little nest-egg in the bank; he gets a chance to buy some good investment or a share in the business in which he is engaged as an employee. There is the nest-egg in the bank which he can fall back upon. Or he wants

to buy his first home. Suppose he has not enough. There again comes the value of the bank account in that he can go to a banker, show him what he has saved, demonstrating that he is thrifty. Nothing impresses a banker more quickly or decisively of a young fellow's character, and he will the more readily pin his faith and make a loan to a young man who has demonstrated his ability to do for himself up to his limit. A bank account is in that way a direct and live asset and security.

"Then another point," continued Mr. Curtis. "If a young fellow learns to save for himself, the habit of saving will become ingrained and he will be far more likely to want to save for his employer. And that every employee should be willing to do. If it is only to economize in rubber bands, string, pens, pencils, what-not. It is the small things that count: the little leaks in business that are costly. He shows in this way that he has the interests of his employer at heart, and is looking after them. He need not be afraid his employer won't know it; employers have a faculty for finding out the young fellow in the ranks who has their interests at heart.

"So the habit of thrift is double-edged: it helps the young man in his own finances and it helps him in getting along in his job.

"Let him read what John J. Hill said on this point."

This is what Mr. Hill said:

> If you want to know whether you are destined to be a success or a failure in life, you can easily find out. The test is simple and it is infallible. Are you able to save money? If not, drop out. You will lose. You may think not, but you will lose, as sure as you live. The seed of success is not in you.

This is a difficult bit of gospel for many to believe, and it seems particularly difficult to the American temperament. In the European mind thrift has become a fixed element in success: it is a recognized necessity. The Dutch have wrought the miracle of a nation from thrift; likewise the French. Not being landowners to the same extent, the British have not acquired thrift as a dominating trait, and yet it is a cardinal factor in the British temperament.

The American is prodigal. The blessing which has come to America is its greatest affliction: God has been too good to the American people. The result is wastefulness to a criminal extent. The savers in America are largely—not entirely, of course, but largely—the foreign-born. The savings-banks attest this. The American regards thrift in the light of a shortcoming: to him

it borders on the penurious. He cannot bear to be regarded as "stingy" or thought of as "mean" or "near." He has a score of words always ready to define thrift, and each a wrong definition. He has an instinctive dislike for the word economy, let alone the practice of it. Spending and not saving is a national trait. The American farmer's wife is perhaps the best example of American thrift, and yet at her very door her husband allows the by-products of his farm to go to waste and leaves his implements out in the weather over the winter to rust! He tills his soil with the greatest waste of motion and, of course, of time, and yet his wife makes soap to save buying it at the store. It is true that this sorry condition of affairs is confined more and more to the small farmer, for the agricultural colleges are doing much to bring about a new and more scientific method on the larger farms. But the fact still remains that there are a greater number of small than large farmers.

What is true of the farm is true of the home in village, town, or city: the waste is enormous. Food is wasted, time, effort,—practically everything. Thrift is at a premium, and so long as this condition prevails the economic status of the majority cannot and will not be on a sound basis.

No man ever yet reached a competency except by the one road of thrift. If there is a seed to success, as Mr. Hill rightly says, it is this habit of saving. It is not difficult to acquire wealth if one has this one all-essential fixed in his mind, a part of his nature. Thrift does not mean penury. Theodore Roosevelt gave an excellent definition of thrift when he called it common sense applied to spending. If the average man who finds it easy to make money found it equally easy to save money there would be fewer tales of heart-breakings and misery in our American homes among its women and children.

The easiest road to get money is to save it. But it seems to be a road that the American finds anything but easy. He seems to be perfectly willing to work for money, but curiously unwilling to have his money work for him. John D. Rockefeller has told of the first fifty dollars he ever earned. It represented an entire summer's work in a store, and it was paid to him in a lump sum at the end of the season. A friend suggested that he lend the sum on interest. He did, and when he received back the fifty dollars with the interest, the amount which the money had earned without any effort on his part appealed to him with singular force. "I knew," he said, "how hard and how long I had worked

for the fifty dollars. But the interest I had not worked for at all, and yet it rightfully belonged to me." And from that moment, he added, he determined that in addition to working for money, he would make money work for him. "And that resolution," he concluded, "was the basis of all I have."

Of course, I was born in a land of thrift: The Netherlands. But I cannot remember a time in my life when I did not put by a part of what I earned after I came to America. Of my first wages, fifty cents per week, I saved five cents, and I never departed from the practice. As my income grew larger, I saved a larger proportion: I saw to it that my savings always exceeded my expenses. So when a man tells me this is impracticable, I know from my experience that it is not. I have tested thrift and practised it on every kind of an income, and always with responsibilities to meet and others to support.

In fact, I cannot see the sense of working hard through an entire year, for instance, only to find oneself at the end of that year exactly as at the beginning. Where is progress in that method? Where is the result of the effort? And if one cannot show result for an effort, to what purpose the effort? It is like paying rent for a house, only at the end of ten years to have no

house to show for it except one belonging to another whose money you have helped to work not for yourself, but for him. It may be a very pleasing game to some to make others richer, but to me it has proven a much pleasanter game to push myself along a bit!

I remember a friend of mine of moderate means who, never having practised saving for himself, determined to begin with his first-born son, and made a resolution to put a penny in a small toy bank for the boy at the end of the first week after his birth and double it each week, the idea being to present the total to the boy upon his attainment of his twenty-first birthday. I made no comment to my friend upon the scheme, knowing that the lesson of this compound method of saving would soon be forced home upon him in a manner that would surprise him. I calculated his income, and knew he would reach the end of his plan by about the eighth week. He did, but it taught him in the most graphic way the tremendous potentiality of the smallest unit.

We do not realize what saving can mean until we have experimented with it a bit. Saving money is simply a matter of habit to be acquired the same as other habits. The trouble is so few are willing to try it: once tried, however, the

fascination grows and it becomes a game that has in it the most astonishing elements of thrilling excitement.

Saving is simple: the simplest habit we can acquire. Where the difficult part comes in is in its rigid continuance and in resisting the temptation to spend what has been saved. That calls for character, but that exercise of the will-power is exactly the quality that makes for success and the great boon of becoming financially independent later in life.

It is difficult to realize when the faculties are alert and things are coming our way, when the income is comfortable, that the years ahead will bring a time when the faculties begin to lose their clear-cut method of functioning, and when illness, misfortune, or disaster may combine to minimize our earning capacity. But that time comes to each of us, and it is the wise man or woman who realizes it and prepares for the inevitable. Then in proportion as we lay up a part of our income or spend it all will the rest of our lives be tinged with keen regret, as sharp as a razor, or made mentally and physically comfortable by our provision.

It is one of the happiest signs in our American life that one sees a growing tendency toward a change in the American character with regard to

saving. We are beginning to inquire a little more closely into our expenditures and the products which our money purchases; we are becoming a trifle more insistent upon the return we are getting in our buying: these are the first steps toward thrift. We have a long way to go yet before we acquire thrift as a national habit, but surely, if slowly, the consciousness is dawning upon the minds of many that, no matter what other qualities a man may have which tend toward material success, if he lacks the habit of saving, if he spends as much as he earns, he is as surely destined for failure at the end as the night follows the day.

There can be no material success without thrift as the basis: it is, unquestionably, the seed of success.

CHAPTER XXV

THE MAGNITUDE OF WHAT HE HAS BUILT UP

IT is very difficult for the mind not accustomed to publishing problems to form an intelligent conception of the magnitude of the business which Mr. Curtis has so successfully built. Even those most closely associated with it fail to grasp its colossal proportions. Perhaps the one least of all concerned in the proportions of the business, or what they actually mean, in their potentiality, is Mr. Curtis. In all the years I have known him I have never heard him say a single word as to the magnitude of the business. To what extent he is actually conscious of it is difficult to say. Upon one occasion an official of the company had described in almost unbelievable figures the amount of white paper consumed by the Curtis publications during a year.

Mr. Curtis listened respectfully, but made no comment. After the man left the office, as he made no comment, I exclaimed: "Amazing figures!"

"Yes, I suppose so," was the answer. "I pre-

sume he gave them to amaze me. But they didn't; I failed to get them. Besides, what good are they?"

Certainly an impersonal reception of a graphic statement of one's own achievement!

It calls for a long stretch of the imagination to follow the boy who bought his first printing-press for two dollars and a half to the man whose wonderful battery of two hundred and thirty printing-presses in the Curtis plant alone aggregates to-day a total cost value of over five and a quarter millions of dollars. This means the largest equipment of any publishing organization in the world, since it must be remembered that the presses are only a part of the printing plant in its entirety. To this must be added the bindery, stereotyping, composition, and other integral parts of the vast machinery necessary to a complete publishing manufactory.

To realize how far this man has gone one needs to picture him in his admiration of the lithograph of the old Ledger Building to his present ownership not only of that building, and of the mammoth building to be erected on that site, but of the Curtis Building, itself covering an entire city block of twenty-two acres, with its million square feet of contents occupied to the last foot.

THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY'S WAREHOUSE

On Washington Avenue, Philadelphia, where the company's white paper and ink are stored with a reserve coal-yard adjoining. Less than a half-day's consumption of white paper is represented in the rolls of paper

Never did the little Portland newsboy, serving his papers at four o'clock in the morning, realize that some day between forty and fifty thousand boys would be selling his periodicals not only on the streets of his own land, but on the banks of the Nile, on the streets of Tokio, and in the mountain passes of Switzerland.

When his little four-page boy magazine came from his precious hand-press in Portland, he little dreamed the time would come when six hundred and fifty thousand complete magazines, from fifty-six to two hundred and forty pages each, would come from his presses every working-day, and when over twenty-seven billion magazine pages would be printed in a single year by his presses. It is almost impossible for the mind to grasp an output of such dimensions, to say nothing of the seventy-three million newspapers which come from his *Ledger* plant each year.

When he proudly looked at his first roll of paper upon which *Young America* was to be printed his mind could not have grasped a future when he would use over two hundred millions of pounds of white paper a year for his magazines alone.

He was proud enough when, in Philadelphia, he employed his first assistant at five dollars

per week, little realizing that the time would come when he would have only a few short of five thousand employees in his magazine plant. And this enormous aggregation is entirely apart from an annual pay-roll on his newspaper plant of over two and a half millions of dollars.

Such figures suggest an achievement compared to which pages from the *Arabian Nights* seem commonplace, and yet one man has built up such an undertaking over a comparatively short span of less than fifty years.

There was a time in Mr. Curtis's career when to buy a dollar's worth of postage-stamps was a sizable expenditure: to-day more than ten million United States postage-stamps are consumed in letter postage by his company, to say nothing of the amount paid on his magazines which require over one hundred railroad cars a month to move.

When the young publisher of *Young America*, at twelve years of age, reached his first one hundredth reader, he felt a glow of pride. The thrill that he then felt was probably greater than now if he ever stops to realize that one of every ten women in the United States reads his *Ladies' Home Journal*, and more than one of every ten families in the country reads his *Saturday Evening Post*.

From a start, then, of three cents capital in 1862, an American boy has demonstrated how in fifty years he can, of his own initiative, with a love for business and by hewing ever close to the line of the strictest integrity, become the head of a company with the largest capital stock of any publishing corporation in the United States. Marvellous it seems and, in a sense, it is, and yet, carefully analyzed, the achievement is one of consistent directness of attack and simplicity of development.

What Cyrus H. K. Curtis has done is not what has been done once and can never be repeated: it lies in the lap of every young man in the United States who has the will to work and a belief in the fascination and romance of business.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE MAN BEHIND

MR. CURTIS is now in his seventy-third year, but in appearance and activity he belies his years. He is as light as a kitten on his feet. Having walked so much as a boy carrying newspapers, he has never lost the habit, and walks where other men ride. Few men use their automobiles less. His attitude toward his years is one of the surest ways of keeping his youth. He pays no attention to them. He has no silly notions about concealing his age, but keeps his mind alert, plays golf, and walks to keep himself physically well, eats carefully and sparingly, and keeps his interests fresh and varied. He has the wisdom and balance of his years, but with an eternally youthful spirit, youthful in the desire for achievement.

There was a period when Mr. Curtis had long-protracted illnesses in his family, and for years one or two nurses were regular members of the household. Some of the nurses lived in Mr. Curtis's home for four years continuously; one for over eight years. The personal character

of the man cannot be better given than in the invariable comment of these nurses, based on their living in scores of families on terms of closest intimacy.

"Never have I seen a man in a home," was the unanimous verdict of these nurses as expressed by the one of eight-year tenure, "who is so even-tempered. He is absolutely the same on the last day of a year as he is on the first day."

Which characterization is unerringly true. I have lived and worked with Mr. Curtis for over thirty years in the closest association possible, and never during the last twenty years, since his marvellous self-control of his nervous system, have I known a man of such equable temperament, equable to a point almost uncanny, for his temperament remains absolutely placid under the most trying conditions. There must, of course, be times when he is ruffled, but he never shows it. What irritates other people does not seem, in the least, to disturb the surface placidity of his nature. If he is worried he keeps it to himself, and one has to know him long and intimately to discover his times of perplexities. "Why worry other folks with your worries?" he said once. "They have their own." And so he keeps his counsel, and

works out his own perplexities within and by himself, always keeping a cheerful exterior to his family and the world.

His sense of humor is unfailing, and his brown eyes are almost always twinkling. They snap, too, but only on rare occasions.

His nature is essentially spiritual, although he makes absolutely no display of outward and visible signs. When he occupied his first home of any pretension in Camden, New Jersey, and sat down for his first meal, he surprised his family by saying that they had much to be thankful for and suggested oral grace. From that day to this, each meal at the Curtis home is opened with a simple supplication.

When he had reconstructed the music in the First Presbyterian Church, at Camden, New Jersey, the minister suggested to Mr. Curtis that since he had shown such an interest in the work of the church, it would seem fitting and logical if he would enroll himself on the membership. Mr. Curtis assented until he began to realize that he would have to appear before the elders of the church and be asked various questions with regard to creed and theology with which he had scant patience and of which he knew nothing. The minister assured him that this could be very much simplified if Mr.

Curtis desired it. He did, and then asked: "How simple?"

"Well," pondered the minister, clearly at a loss for a very simple answer. "Can you answer Christ's question to Peter 'Lovest thou Me?'"

"Sure," was the answer. "If that is all."

And it was all, in Mr. Curtis's case: perhaps the simplest inductive questionnaire by which a man ever became a member of a church.

His love of simplicity and dislike of formality was well illustrated in an incident when President Harding appointed Mr. Curtis as a member of the commission to represent the United States, in company with Secretary of State Hughes, at the Centennial Exposition at Rio de Janeiro in 1922. Mr. Curtis looked forward to visiting the Brazilian capital with the keenest interest until some four days before his scheduled sailing he discovered that he would have to take with him, among his belongings, a frock-coat and high silk hat for official occasions. All pleasure in the trip vanished from that moment, and he discussed with seriousness the question of whether he would disarrange the plans of the commission at such a late day if he were to withdraw. "Fancy going around in such togs," was his comment, "and in summer weather, too." His irritation and disgust with

diplomatic usage was really delicious to watch, but it was thoroughly characteristic of the simplicity of his nature. Fortunately, and unfortunately, family illness at the last moment compelled him to cancel the trip, and his relief, so far as the diplomatic habiliments were concerned, knew no bounds.

He is punctiliously neat in his dress, and most fastidious about his person. He is careful of his habits, and regulates his eating to suit his years. His wants are of the simplest, his needs are few. No picture is more characteristic than that of the man seated in his dining-room, almost regal in its appointments, eating a bowl of milk and gruel for supper!

He forgets names, but he never forgets faces. As a little boy he was taken by his mother into an ice-cream parlor in Portland, and treated to a plate of ice-cream. It cost six cents, but he did not know it. The ice-cream tasted good to the boy, and the next day he went in, ate a dish of the ice-cream, and put two cents on the table,—all he had. A negro had waited on him, and was furious. Forty years later Mr. Curtis was in Portland in the winter, and saw a negro shovelling snow. He accosted him, and asked if he worked once in Robinson's Restaurant. The negro said he did, and the year corre-

sponded with the ice-cream incident. He recalled it to the negro, who did not remember it. "Well, here are the four cents," said Mr. Curtis, as he gave the astonished negro a dollar bill and walked away.

All through his life a dog has been his invaluable companion. He has never bred dogs, and is absolutely democratic in his tastes, as long as it is a dog. If he has a fondness for one breed more than another it is for collies.

To the despair of his family, he became a habitual player of solitaire, and no one could understand his interest in the game. Nor did he vary: it was the same game of solitaire over and over. Then one day he disclosed his liking for it; he explained it was mechanical: it gave his hands something to do and that when playing it seemed easier to solve business problems.

A day came when Mr. Curtis was to be disillusioned in a friendship. He was slow to concede it: he never did, in fact, in words to any one, but it was patent to his family that the realization had come to him. One of his strongest principles of honesty in thinking and action was involved, and he could not give way, much as he valued the friendship at stake. He decided, as he only could, to stand by his principles, and the friendship was shattered. Then

came the only remark he was ever heard to make in comment on the friend or the situation: "Well," he said, "there are some things more precious than individual friendships, precious as those are."

During the period of the completion of the Curtis Building, on Independence Square, it was noticeable that his interest in it was almost entirely gone. No one could understand his attitude in contrast to his keen interest during the erection of the building up to that time. With his usual disinclination to talk, he never explained his mental attitude until one day his daughter commented on the beauty of the building.

"Yes," replied her father. "But I've lost all interest in it, now that your mother has gone and never lived to see it completed."

His disinclination to accept any tribute to himself or what he has done was aptly illustrated on one of his visits to London. He was to have luncheon with Lord Northcliffe in the *London Times* office. As he entered the building one of the editors met him to take him to Lord Northcliffe's office.

"Nice compliment, Mr. Curtis, they've paid you," remarked the editor, "raising the American flag over The Times Building in your

THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY'S BUILDING

Facing Independence Square and flanking on Washington Square, Philadelphia

honor. First time it has ever been done, you know."

"Yes, very nice," returned Mr. Curtis, his eyes all a-sparkle.

As he was leaving, Lord Northcliffe's secretary, Sir Campbell Stuart, spoke of the flag. Mr. Curtis looked at him, and seeing that the secretary was serious, he asked: "What's the joke?"

"Joke?" answered Sir Campbell. "There's no joke. Didn't you see the American flag flying over the building as you came in?"

Still unbelieving, Mr. Curtis looked up cautiously when he got outside the building, and there, true enough, was the American flag flying over the building of The Thunderer—for the first time in its history.

"Thought all along they were joshing me," was Mr. Curtis's only comment.

In his associations, he is essentially democratic. He mixes with all kinds of people. He finds the same degree of pleasure, if anything keener, in attending the ball of the carriers of his newspapers and dancing with the wives and daughters of his employees as he does in dining with the Duke of York at a formal British dinner. He is in every respect approachable to all, and feels equally at home with a child as with a man of the ripest years. Children he loves,

indeed, and his spirits have been rejuvenated by the young grandchildren which his second marriage has brought around him. "I like to have them around," he says, and he shows it, and no matter how much noise the children may make, it never seems to disturb him. "Good for their lungs," is his only comment. "I don't believe in the old adage that 'Children should be seen and not heard.' "

Mr. Curtis asks that his sports shall have activity in them. Yachting he adores, particularly in rough weather. Golf he enjoys because he can walk. Horseback he enjoys because of its motion. These sports suit his active mind and active body. He cannot, therefore, understand how any one can sit quietly in a boat and fish. That is beyond his understanding.

A friend persuaded him once to embark on his only fishing trip. It was arranged that the party should sleep on board Mr. Curtis's yacht, be called at three-thirty, have breakfast at four o'clock, and leave so as to be on the fishing grounds at five. The friend was not given to early rising, and Mr. Curtis felt security in this fact that the early arrangements would not go through.

But at three-thirty the next morning he was called by his steward. He went to his friend's

stateroom, found him up and about, and asked: "You really mean it, do you?"

Mr. Curtis dressed, ate his breakfast in silence, and allowed himself to be taken to the fishing grounds. For two hours he sat in the boat with indifferent luck so far as catching anything was concerned. At seven o'clock it began to rain. Mr. Curtis's eyes brightened with a gleam of hope as he said, "It's raining," and began to reel up.

"Now, there'll be some fishing," said the friend, and put on a rain-coat.

"You don't mean to say that you are going to sit here in the rain and keep on fishing?" asked Mr. Curtis in blank despair.

"Sure," said the friend. "Now the fish will bite."

"All right," said Mr. Curtis, as he looked at the shore. "You can have them. Let me get on shore. I'm going home."

"But there's no vehicle. We have sent it back," argued the friend.

"Never mind about the vehicle," answered Mr. Curtis. On shore he was put.

And a happier man never walked six miles home.

"Never again," he said when he reached home. "Once is enough."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BUSINESS MAN AFTER HE ACHIEVES

WHEN Mr. Curtis purchased *The Public Ledger* he did in his way what other men have done in retiring from business. It was only another way of performing a civic duty. He had no need or desire to accumulate more money; he did not covet power. His imagination did not render attractive the idea of retiring from the business which had engrossed him all his life. He would not have been happy had he done so. So he chose to devote the experience he had derived from his years in publishing to the altruistic purpose of giving the city of his residence a newspaper which would be pointed to as an object of pride to the community. His business sense would not have been satisfied if he failed to make a commercial success of his newspaper, but that was not his primary purpose. His action was just as much of a direct civic contribution to the city as if his tastes had led him to accept public office or venture into welfare-organization work. His inclinations simply did not lead into those directions,

but they did lead to another form of exactly the same idea: that of serving his city.

I happen to know that since his acquirement of *The Ledger* properties he could several times have withdrawn very large profits, but each time that those profits became apparent he would order more money spent, either on his editorial forces, new presses, an expansion of his cable service, or, latterly, in the erection of a more adequate building for his newspapers.

This kind of thinking after a man has amassed sufficient means for his family and his own desires is none too prevalent among American business men, but, happily, it is a condition of mind which is increasing, and is destined to increase as the years go by. The American business man has yet to learn the lesson so well learned by the man of affairs of Europe and Great Britain: that the fulness of life does not consist in remaining in the harness until he drops in it, but that he owes it to himself, his family, and his community to give a portion of his life to something else than the further acquisition of money or power.

The time comes when a man must give service: it is as much a duty at one time in his life to work for others as it is his duty at another period in his career to work for himself. A man, if he would live a four-squared life, cannot go on from

the opening of the chapter until its close and think only of himself. There is something more to life. A man meets this issue when it is unpleasantly forced home to his attention by arguing how this duty does not apply to his particular case, and he is often most ingenious in trying to satisfy himself that he is right. But he is never wholly successful in the attempt. Whether he will acknowledge it or not, either to himself or to others, he knows in his heart that life is not made up wholly of self-aggrandizement. And this consciousness is bound to come to a larger proportion of our American men as one after another reaches the stage of conviction and sets the example. The finger in our national life is going to point very unpleasantly, in the future, to the mere money-maker who is content simply with acquirement. "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing."

It is no use for a man to try to convince himself that because his whole life has been immersed in business he thereby has unfitted himself for the public welfare in his later years when his conscience begins to be a little active, and starts to whisper and argue with him. This is an uncomfortable mental position for a man to find himself in, because a man has to live with himself for the rest of his life, and unless he can

completely satisfy the troublesome inner voice of his conscience when it begins to knock at the door of his reason he has uncomfortable days ahead of him which no one will envy him. A man who cannot inwardly satisfy himself is not a man who will derive that complete happiness from his life achievement to which every man is entitled and which goes to add to the years of his being. If men only knew it, they could add ten and twenty years to their lives by using aright the period after their achievement in the world of material affairs.

A man came to me not long ago who had decided to retire from business. "Six months ago," he said, "I was unconvinced that I could safely leave my responsibility, but I have thought it over and reached exactly the opposite conclusion: that my business which I have built up in thirty-six years will be the better for it if I take my hands off and give my younger men a chance. I shall keep myself upon call for consultation, but not for active participation."

He was fifty-one years of age, and did a business last year of three million dollars.

"But," he added, "I have made the mistake so common to most American business men. I have followed my business to the exclusion of all else, and now I have no inner resources. I can-

not, with my active temperament, sit down and twiddle my thumbs, and to follow the seasons and play golf all year seems a waste of time."

"Why should you?" I asked.

"It's all I know," he replied.

"What has been your hobby outside of business?" I asked. I knew, but I wanted him to say it.

"Golf, and going to the theatre twice a week for relaxation," was his summary with a grim smile. "Pretty barren. I realize it now."

"You have given your money liberally, though. To what particular charity or interest did you give most generously?" I continued.

He told me. I asked him to which one particular work he gave most. He cited three. When asked why, he explained that they interested him the more because of the practical work they were doing. "It wasn't the up-in-the-air work that so many organizations do: it got down to bed rock, to the people who needed it most," he explained.

"Which one of the three appealed to you strongest, do you think?" I urged.

"Well," he pondered and then named the one I hoped he would.

"Why don't you go into that work, and sup-

ply exactly what they need in that work to make it more effective and expand it?" I asked.

"I know nothing about it," he answered.

I took a letter out of the drawer of my desk, and handed it to him. It offered me the presidency of the organization. "They are coming to me for my answer to-morrow at eleven o'clock," I said. "Come and sit in and listen while I get them to tell of their work."

The next morning he came and heard the committee, two of whom he knew, explain the kind of man they were looking for as a president.

"In other words, you want a business man," I said, "a man who can reshape your organization; put two or three new men in the more important places, inspire and direct their work; salesmen, in other words, who can sell your work just as commercial salesmen sell their manufactured products; put the organization on a budget and conduct it as a man would his business, supplying ordinary common sense, executive judgment, and the ability to initiate and produce results through others."

"Exactly," said the committee as with one voice.

I had recited precisely what my friend had done with his business. He began to see with

dawning clearness what so many business men fail to see: that what business demands in a man is precisely what the organizations outside of business demand and which if they had in their governing head, the altruistic work of the world would be farther advanced. It is not a question of a different set of talents: exactly the same set of talents is required, and no matter how thoroughly a man may have immersed himself in business to the exclusion of all else, he still possesses the precise judgment, the exact faculty of sizing up men: the identical executive ability and the "selling" quality that the organizations devoted to welfare stand in such crying need of. Instead of an utter submergence in business unfitting a man for successful public-welfare work of any kind, it is the identical experience which fits him so completely for the work. It is the clear, steady head, with the force and personality of the business man sharpened and developed in affairs, that is so urgently needed in so much welfare work.

The business man concerned in the above incident became president. He has been in the harness now for fourteen months. A happier man is scarcely to be found in New York. From the moment he took hold of his new work, it

responded to his touch. He revitalized the organization, reshaped it here and there; dropped not a single attaché, but encouraged and inspired them all; is working by a budget which cut the expenses twenty per cent, and last winter the organization did a quality and quantity of work unequalled in its history. And it was a success and a going concern at that. All it needed was practical leadership to send it skimming along new and unseen paths which were at once obvious to the trained business mind.

A man had overworked in his business during the war, and broken down. Three physicians worked their hardest to bring him round. They finally succeeded. "But," they warned, "no return to your old business. The mind must not get back into its old grooves. You can be as active as you like, but not there. Leave that to your associates. You go into some entirely new line; something that will absorb you as did your business; something, if possible, for the benefit of your fellow men. Go in for civics, education, the fine arts, welfare, anything, and go into it as far as you like. But keep away from the old grooves. Forget money-making. You've done enough of that."

"All fine enough," he said to me. "The doc-

tors are probably right. But what will I get into? I have never known anything but my business. It's just been coal, coal all my life."

We went over the same ground as I had with my friend of the previous instance, and naturally we emerged at the same point of sanity and clarity. This man is now likewise busy: as busy and as contented as any man I ever saw. "Wouldn't go back to business for the world," he said to me recently. "My only trouble is to let go so as to get away this summer for a vacation."

"Happy at it, evidently," I commented.

"Happy?" he echoed. "My dear fellow, never been so happy in my life. Never felt so well. I wouldn't have believed it possible how differently a man can feel working for the other fellow instead of working for himself."

The truth is, if men could realize what that feeling really is and what it means to a man's mental, physical, and spiritual being, we would have a perfect exodus from the business world into the world so full of waiting responsibilities and offering a quality of service that would add ten years to the life of the average business man who to-day feels burdened, depressed, and old before his time.

What the average man cannot get through

his head is the principle of dividing his life between two periods: one of acquisition and the other of distribution. John D. Rockefeller sensed this, and has reached the age of eighty-four doing it and playing golf with his mind active enough with his distributions to keep him vitally interested, while all his other associates in The Standard Oil who failed to do it, have passed off. But Mr. Rockefeller had the divination to see that a time comes, to a man who has acquired, where he must cease taking out of the world and put something into it. A man's life is like the soil of a farm: the time comes when he must put into the soil what he has taken out; else life becomes barren and unproductive.

We need not amass the fortune of a Rockefeller: his is an extreme case of enormous wealth. It is not the man so much who has made money in large quantities as the man who has large executive ability, who has used this gift from God to build himself up and his family, who, having acquired an ample competence, is entirely able, if he wishes, to turn his ability from further personal aggrandizement to a similar achievement in a field where he will build up some effective instrument for others. The sooner this man realizes that no inner and complete satisfaction

will come to him if he persists in his self-centred course; the sooner he gets the truth into his mind that from those to whom much has been given much is expected; the sooner it comes to him that what is his to-day has come to him from the public, and should in a measure go back to that public; the sooner he realizes that we who are fathers will in the future be remembered by our children not by the money we were able to make and pile up, but by what we did with it when we got it, the sooner we will see a more contented race of American men who to-day, in offices and on the street and on golf-courses, are dropping in their tracks from strains on their hearts overworked in the race for more power, more money, and more self-centred achievement.

"As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand."

CHAPTER XXVIII

"WITH ALL THY GETTING"

AFTER Mr. Curtis's work has been done and his achievements reckoned, the building of his great magazine properties will be his business monument. Upon this remarkable result his claim as an organizer and executive will rest. And through his periodicals he will have wielded a tremendous influence upon American thought and life. For it is singularly true of the publishing business, since it deals with the printed word, that moral influence goes with material success. As Theodore Roosevelt once said to me: "You editors are so fortunate in your work: you can do good and make money at the same time." But, in the final analysis, the conception of his three magazines came to Mr. Curtis as a means of livelihood; as commercial propositions.

But this is not true of his assumption of *The Public Ledger*. There we find the man of sixty-three embarking upon an enterprise from a pure altruistic motive. When other men, at this age, drop the reins of business and assume purely

civic, educational, or philanthropic work to round out their lives and bring that inner satisfaction that service for others alone can give, Mr. Curtis decided to dedicate his experience to the establishment of a great national newspaper which would be a credit to his city and under local ownership. This purpose was not understood, even in Philadelphia, at the time,—it is not now, for that matter. Such a purpose is difficult to understand at any time and at any place. Nevertheless, the fact remains. The purpose was there, sole and single. None other persuaded or moved him. He had made all the money he wanted or could comfortably employ. He had arrived at that age when most men refuse rather than assume added responsibility. The path lay wide open to him for an easy life: for travel, for reading, for sport, for that leisure which so many seek and enjoy. But he chose instead to assume a greater responsibility than ever before, and one with problems of which he knew nothing. He had rejected newspaper property after newspaper property offered him in other cities; he turned a deaf ear to every negotiation leading him into the newspaper field until his pride for his city was touched. Then his interest was aroused, his enthusiasm was fired, and the awakening came.

It is this striking and concrete evidence of the true civic spirit that Mr. Curtis will leave behind to his family as his greatest legacy of a four-square life. To his daughter, his grandsons, and his stepchildren, and their children, *The Public Ledger* will always connote the act of a man who, having amassed a competency for his family, determined to leave behind him evidence that his purpose was not purely one for self alone.

And it is exactly from this new and unexpected source of having the standards of our lives measured by our children, that this whole question of a successful man's duty to some one else than himself is confronting those of us who are fathers.

It is already dawning upon the minds of the older generation of men that their successors are not looking at things in the same way as they have looked at them and are looking; that the day has come to listen to the injunction: "With all thy getting, get understanding."

It is already being brought home to some men that when a man has accumulated a competence by the energy and the development of his ability and experience, he owes a duty to his family who have stood by him, seen him through his troublous years, and who have sent him out

into his world of achievement well fed, well cared for, and with the priceless stimulant of love to push him on:—a duty to leave behind him, for them, a name that will stand for something else than the mere acquisition of money.

The next generation has already a much clearer idea of the real meaning of life than we ever had. Our sons and daughters are already beginning to see and discuss the view that there is something more to life than the mere making of money: that man cannot live by bread alone. These successors of ours are going to look back to our records and ask, as did one son recently: "Yes, I know that father made a lot of money and built up a big business. But what else did he do?" That will be the acid test: "What else did he do?" That is the yardstick by which hundreds of present-day fathers will be measured, and our name and our works will mean to our children exactly what we make that name stand for and the works that we fashion with our hands. And, as things are, it will be a merciless reckoning for some of us. The next generation is on the way to new standards of living and new ideas of responsibility. Everywhere the signs are on the horizon. Talk with the future men and women who are leaving our colleges. Theirs is no longer the sordid material

mind that knows only the dollar-mark and nothing else.

The father who thinks the situation out and through, the older he gets the more does he realize that his children are all that he has: they are his hopes; in them lies the perpetuation that is so close to every man. What else in the future have we, as fathers, that is worth while? It is solely and singly what our son is going to be: the kind of woman our girl will be. Our hearts are centred on those thoughts: they are our dreams; our prayers are fulfilled or not as they develop or fail of development. It is all very well to expect much of them. But what do we give them to go by in our lives and our examples? A record of self-achievement? Creditable. A man's first thought and ambition, as it should be. But what more? "What else did father do?" How will our record bear that question: the scrutiny of the son or daughter with an awakened civic conscience which already believes, and will realize more fully than ever in the years to come, that for a man to live a four-squared life he must have made the world a little better because he lived in it. This is not idle theory: it is a fact, a condition, a state of mind already with us. It is already in the minds of the young, and the times ahead

will be conducive to the elaboration and cultivation of this measurement of a man's life. "I know, I know," said a twenty-four-year son to me the other day, "I have heard a lot about my father's ability to make money and the money he has made. But I have been watching him, and I don't see that he does much with it, except to use it to make more money."

"I have been watching him." That is the first sign; and hundreds of fathers, devoted to their families and hopeful of their sons, are today, unknown to themselves, being watched and their measures taken. In the balance of the minds of their own are they being weighed, and it is up to them, and distinctly up to them, too, to decide how far or not they shall be found wanting.

Here is an authentic instance which shows the way our sons are going and the kind of experience that an increasing number of fathers will have in the future.

A clear-eyed, clean-limbed young chap returned from his college graduation to his father's home in the suburbs of a large Western city.

That evening the father said: "Well, son, you're through college. Now what?"

"I would like to go into civics in the city, father," was the answer.

"Civics?" echoed the father, laying down his paper. "Why civics?"

"Well, it has seemed to me," said the son in a tone that left no doubt of its certainty, "that the people of the city have done a great deal for us, through your business: that it is from their hand, in an indirect way, that I received my education, and it struck me that if I have gotten anything out of that opportunity, I should give it back to them. I have been reading the home papers at college for the last year, and general conditions do not seem to me to be getting any better. And I thought some one in this family ought to take a hand and try to contribute."

A slight flush came into the face of the father, as he said: "I should judge from your last remark that you don't think I do."

"I haven't read or heard of your doing so, father. So I asked Uncle Ben and Aunt Jess the other day when they were at college, and they said that 'business was your long suit,' and that you had never gone in for anything else. I don't mean for one moment to criticise, father: such a thing is farthest from my mind. Doubtless you have your reasons for hewing close to the business and giving all your abilities to its extension. But the people of our

city certainly have been good to you, and thus to us, and if, as I heard you say the other day, your business is getting better all the time, and if, as I get from the newspapers, the city is getting worse all the time, it seems to me there is something due from us. Am I too altruistic?"

"Not at all, my boy. On the contrary, I think you have a very good angle on the situation. I like it," added the father.

"I am glad of that, sir," fervently answered the son. "You have been mighty good to me, father; your hand has always been out to me when I needed it, and I don't want in any way to go against your plans or wishes for me. But I thought when you asked me 'What now?' you would like me to be frank."

"That's right, son," said the father, as he fixed a steady look on his boy's face, and then transferred it to that of his wife, who caught a world of meaning in it.

The following evening after dinner the father asked: "Going out this evening, son?"

"No, sir," answered the boy.

"Well, let's sit down and have a chat," said the father, lighting a cigar. "I have thought quite a little about what you said last evening, and the more I have considered what you said the better I liked it and you."

"Thanks, father, a lot for saying that," said the boy.

"I mean it, boy," said the father, as he gave his boy his straight, full eyes. "But you're the only succession I have, you know, for the business, and it would seem a bit unnecessary to let the business go into other hands when I have always hoped it might remain in the family. Tell me frankly, have you anything against my business as a business, or against business as a proposition?"

"Indeed, no: not for one minute," answered the boy. "On the contrary, I think you have built up a marvellous business, father, and everybody says you have built it up on the square deal with the public. Uncle says there isn't a dishonest nickel in it. No, no, father, I like your business, and I like business as a proposition: I have been reading along commercial and financial lines, because mother has told me of your hopes for me, and I wanted you to find me as ready as a fellow can be with a theoretical knowledge at twenty-three."

"Very well said, son," smiled the father. "But you don't want it as an exclusive and all-absorbing job: you'd like a bit of civic on the side. Is that your idea?"

"Exactly. I am perfectly willing and ready

to go into the business if you will let me, and work my darnedest for you. But I would like a chance and time to do something on the side, as you put it, and then when I reach about your age I would like to go in for public welfare altogether. Do you see that as practicable?"

"Perfectly, son, perfectly. And it fits in exactly with a plan I want to propose. How would this strike you? Suppose you go into the business to make it for the present your major job, and take on some civic work in your off hours. Let me play part of my job into your hands, increase the responsibilities of the three partners and their percentage in the business, and let me get gradually out so that I can go in for civics, partly at first and in a year or three, say, altogether. To tell you the truth, son, I haven't been entirely satisfied with myself for quite a while, and what you said has brought the whole thing to a head. I pleased your mother this morning when I told her. How does it get to you, son?"

"Simply wonderful, father. I could ask for nothing better. If you'll go in to do for the city, with your abilities and standing, there's no need for me."

And so it was arranged, and so it came about.

That was twenty-two months ago.

The other day the son said to the father: "Well, father, you're certainly going it strong in your city work. You're on the first page again this evening. At this rate, you're certainly going to have Sis and me remember you as something more than a money-getter."

Said the father to me later: "That was the phrase that got me: 'something more than a money-getter.' It was what it revealed to me: I had been talked over by my son and girl as a mere 'money-getter': these children had gone to my brother and sister to get a line on me, and had been told that business was my long suit and, probably they had added, nothing else. That talk with my son that evening was an eye-opener for me. My boy and I were always good friends, thank God; there wasn't much distance between us, but now we are pals. He awakened me."

And that is exactly what is going to come about: the new generation is going to awaken the old, and in proportion as it does it will rebound to the betterment of men and to the advancement of the American social order. It is a new era of thinking that we fathers are facing with our sons, and the sooner we realize it the better.

The man who goes on and leaves a fortune

to further build up his family, and contents himself with that achievement, perpetuating a name simply by the money he leaves behind, violates a growing, healthful American sentiment.

It will not meet the ideals of our sons and daughters, or satisfy their sense of right, to have us point to the checks we gave, the boards of directors to which we gave our names, or recite the ends of the exhausting days in business to the betterment of our fellow men. These youngsters of ours are a bit too keen for these attempts that we make to deceive the public that the mart is not our God and that the tape is not our Bible. We may criminally mislead some of the public by allowing our names to go on boards of welfare organizations of which we rarely attend a meeting and know little or nothing of the work they are attempting to do. We may perjure ourselves by this method, although we know in our hearts we are simply fooling ourselves. But the very advantages of modern life which we are creating and giving our sons and daughters are being turned to our own disadvantage in opening their eyes to the honest actions of men and women. We are not going to fool these sharp-minded children of ours: we are not fooling them now, al-

though in hundreds of cases fathers and mothers are not realizing this truth.

Through our own blood is the measurement of our service to mankind to come. To the flesh of our flesh our lives are going to look very different from the way they look to our friends of the present generation and to ourselves. Across the span of years our children will look back to our works, and their memories of us shall be as we fashion them. It is for us to so write our lives that we shall leave behind us in the hearts of our children the most precious heritage we can leave to them: our faith that "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold."

As for the man himself, it will be a rich experience for him to get acquainted with his soul before it leaves his body.

CHAPTER XXIX

"THE YOUNGEST MAN IN THE WHOLE OUTFIT"

IT is now some sixty years since the little boy of twelve in his Portland home received the first awakening to his earning capacity from the remark of his mother. During that life span he built up his vision, and kept it always alive in his mind and before him. And back of it he put his will-power. Thus, early in life, he correctly sensed the auto-suggestion theory of Coué that thought must precede determination: that the imagination must first implant the seed for the mind to work upon and propel.

Cyrus Curtis did not do what so many men have done to their physical and mental sorrow: develop the will-power first, giving the will no definite task of the imagination to carry to fruition. He was first the dreamer and then the doer. His ambition soared to leadership, and then practically became the laborer, laying each foundation-stone joyfully and hopefully: of himself and by himself. He sought favor of no one; all he asked was that a fair field be given him. And the world seeing that

he meant to prosper and was willing to work to his goal, gave him, as it always does to the boy of honest purpose and energy, the chance to make good.

It was his vision that gave to him the sense of joyousness of future accomplishment. It gave him at once that correct interpretation of business: the mental picture and soulful conviction of a wonderful game to be played with all the confidence of buoyancy and enthusiasm, with a firm belief in human nature and himself. When he met dishonesty of practice he met it unflinchingly. He kept the bearings he had marked out for himself for a straight course, and he headed to the wind.

Anxious moments had he, but his spirit never faltered. When others showed a wish-bone, he showed a back-bone. He actually did where others dreamed, and always joyously: always full of a happy, light-hearted confidence. Where others faltered, he was firm, because the one had the vision of a task: he had the vision of a game to be as carefully and skilfully worked out as the most difficult game of chess. The currents which entered into his life were as the kings and queens and pawns and bishops for the next wisest move. Full of confidence, he charted his course and then kept to it.

Of men whose lives are written into the annals of American business, few represent to such a marked degree the truth of the romance in business; of the thrills of adventure to be felt at every turn. Where other men have accepted their business lives as filled with dull, dry routine, Mr. Curtis has ever felt the enthusiasm and zest of accomplishment.

Hundreds of men whose business affairs are not of the magnitude or whose problems are not so complex as those of Mr. Curtis have broken under the strain. Not he. Hundreds of men have made the bonds of business so heavy that they have found time or strength for nothing else, and have worn themselves out. Not he. Hundreds of business men have become heavy in body and mind with the years. Not he. Business has not enslaved him. He is master of his branch of it, and finds in it the spur, the delight of it; the thrill and adventure of it. He has not been bound to the wheel through making the wheel go 'round. Always has he set the wheel in motion, and then enjoyed the whir of its activity and the joy of seeing its increasing velocity.

And what is the result of this wise interpretation of business?

He comes out of the game, fresh and alert,

after sixty years of participation in it; his mind keen; with a vitality not only equal but superior to some of his executives who are many years his juniors.

"The youngest man in the whole outfit, in thought and in action," said Lord Northcliffe after he had met all the Curtis executives.

He is.

There I leave him with every faculty alert; with his face set toward his native East, eager for further accomplishment in the great game of business and in his later joy of service for others: a man full of that sterling quality that is inherent in the rock-ribbed character of a man from Maine.

It has not been a simple task, albeit a congenial one, this putting into the hard metal of the type the romantic adventure of this quiet man sparkling with contented happiness. For one always feels of Mr. Curtis that part of him winks and part of him thinks. The great lesson to me in his adventure is that he has taken the small and simple bits of life and found absolute security in them. This great lesson, alone, if learned, would compensate one for writing or reading this book.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

CYRUS HERMANN KOTZSCHMAR CURTIS

THE NINTH OF THE AMERICAN LINE OF THE FAMILY OF CURTIS (OR CURTISS) WHICH CAME TO THE UNITED STATES FROM GREAT BRITAIN THROUGH WILLIAM CURTIS, IN 1632

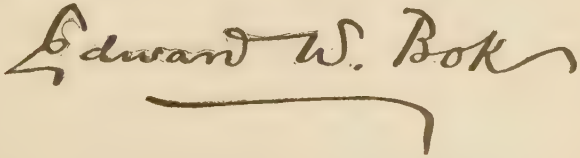
FATHER: CYRUS LIBBY CURTIS, OF GREEN, MAINE
MOTHER: SALOME ANN CUMMINGS, OF BRUNSWICK, MAINE

1850: June 18: Born in Portland, Maine.
1863: Started his first paper, *Young America.*
1869: Left Portland for Boston.
1870: Associated with *The Traveller's Guide.*
1871: Associated with the *Boston Times.*
1872: Associated with *The Boston Independent.*
1872: Founded, with another, *The People's Ledger.*
1875: March 10: Married Louisa Knapp, of Boston.
1876: August 6: Daughter born: Mary Louise Curtis.
1876: Removed from Boston to Philadelphia.
1878: Associated with *The Philadelphia Press.*
1879: Started *The Tribune and Farmer.*
1883: December: Started *The Ladies' Home Journal.*
1890: July 1: Organized The Curtis Publishing Company.
1893: Erected The Curtis Building on 421–425 Arch Street.
1896: Daughter (and only child) married to Edward W. Bok.
1897: Purchased *The Saturday Evening Post.*
1905: Elected director of The Merchants' National Bank of Philadelphia.

1906: Elected director of The Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York.
1909: Elected director of The Real Estate Trust Company of Philadelphia.
1910: Mrs. Curtis passed away.
1910: Elected director of The First National Bank of Philadelphia.
1910: Married Kate Stanwood Pillsbury of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1911: Completion of Curtis Building on Independence Square, Philadelphia.
1911: Purchased *The Country Gentleman.*
1913: January 1: Purchased *The Public Ledger.*
1913: Honorary Degree of Master of Arts conferred by Bowdoin College.
1913: Honorary Degree of LL.D. conferred by Ursinus College.
1914: September 14: Started *The Evening Public Ledger.*
1916: Elected president of New England Society of Philadelphia.
1920: Elected director of The Academy of Music Corporation.
1921: Elected director of The Land Title and Trust Company of Philadelphia.
1922: Began the erection of the first unit of the Public Ledger Building.

A PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It has been particularly pleasing to try to put Mr. Curtis on paper in this book, not alone because of the inspiration which his great adventure in business may in itself be to young men, but for a personal reason. A great deal of praise has come to me based on my thirty years' editorship of "The Ladies' Home Journal." And, as is usual in such cases, much of the praise has been keyed in rather a high pitch. It has been repeatedly said that the wonderful success of the magazine was of my making: that I "made 'The Ladies' Home Journal.'" This narrative will once for all fix the statement in the place where it belongs. It will show as clear as a blue Maine day the hand that was the mainspring of that success; in the background, but always there. I gave only what any man would give: all that was in me in return for the opportunity. But it was Mr. Curtis who gave me the chance unhampered, unrestricted, and without limitation. No other editor was ever given such unwavering support. Without this support, success would have been impossible, no matter how much effort or ability had been given to the project. As the basis of the magazine was of itself the conception of Mrs. Curtis, its first editor, so its subsequent success is the monument of Mr. Curtis's directing genius. A share in that success is permissible, but the hand on the helm, invisible to the public, was always that of "A Man From Maine."



070.509 C941Zb

Bok, Edward William, 1863-1930.

A man from Maine

070.509 C941Zb

Bok, Edward William, 1863-1930.

A man from Maine